

ABSTRACT

Marvin Connelly, Jr., PARTNERSHIPS AMONG SCHOOLS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS: IMPACT ON STUDENT SUCCESS (Under the direction of Dr. William Grobe). Department of Educational Leadership, July 2012.

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived effect of faith-based mentorship on student academic and behavioral success by examining the impact of a specific partnership--the Uplift Mentor Program--a faith-based partnership with a high school in a large urban public school system in North Carolina. The partnership was established with a goal of improving student academic and behavioral success. Group data for students participating in the partnership were compared to group data for a similar demographic sample of students who did not participate in the program to determine if North Carolina End of Course exam growth scores as measured by the North Carolina State ABCs, core course passing rates, and attendance showed improvement while discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions from school decreased. A mixed methods approach using qualitative and quantitative data was used for the study. Using qualitative data enriched the quantitative information by providing personal perceptions gained by administrators, mentors, and teachers about the program's impact on student outcomes. To gain these perceptions, the study included a focus group with teachers and mentors and interviews with school administrators and a church leader. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare differences between the mentor program group and the control group. G-Power software was used to test the effect size of the differences. Although there were no statistically significant relationships found, teachers, mentors, administrators, and the church mission pastor perceived that the program had a positive impact on student outcomes. Additional research with larger samples needs to be conducted to determine the impact of school and faith-based partnerships on student outcomes.

PARTNERSHIPS AMONG SCHOOLS AND FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATIONS:
IMPACT ON STUDENT SUCCESS

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One of my favorite Biblical scriptures is “For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” Jeremiah 29:11 NIV. In every endeavor in life, I have sought the Lord’s guidance because He knows my future and the plans for my life. I also prayed for the right people to be placed in my life for this process and I want to thank those special people for their support, help and guidance along the way. It would not have been possible without the support and help of these colleagues, mentors, friends, and family.

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my best friend and the love of my life, my wife Joyce Ann Connelly. I would also like to dedicate it to our incredible children, Tiana, Marvin III, Phillip and Michael and our grandchildren, Justin, Bryson and London. Always remember that education is one of the keys to success in life – if daddy can do it, all of you can as well. I love you all.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES.....	xii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	2
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Significance of the Study.....	3
Research Question and Research Hypotheses.....	5
Overview of the Methodology.....	6
Definition of Terms.....	8
Limitations of the Study.....	9
Organization of the Dissertation.....	11
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	12
Conceptual Framework and Overview.....	12
Increase in School and Community Partnerships.....	12
Impact of Community Involvement on Achievement and Improved Attendance.....	15
Impact of Community Involvement on Discipline.....	17
School and Faith-Based Partnerships.....	18
Models of School and Faith-Based Partnerships.....	20
Suggestions for Model Partnerships between Schools and Faith-Based Organizations.....	22
Common Themes.....	30
Separation of Church and State.....	30
Faith-Based Organizations as Social Service Entities.....	32
Accountability, Evaluation and Outcomes.....	34

Educational Leadership Challenges: How Some Superintendents were Dealing with the Leadership Challenges Related to Partnerships with Field-Based Organizations.....	36
Policy Implications and Lack of Policy Direction for School Leaders Engaging in Community Partnerships.....	37
Summary.....	46
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY.....	48
Overview.....	48
Context for the Study.....	49
Description of the District in this Study.....	51
Description of the School in this Study.....	53
The Population and Study Participants.....	54
Design of the Study.....	58
Data Collection Procedures.....	61
Processes.....	61
Controls.....	61
Directions.....	62
Statistical Analyses.....	64
Quantitative Analysis.....	64
Qualitative Analysis.....	65
Summary.....	66
Chapter 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY.....	67
Statement of the Problem.....	68
Purpose of the Study.....	68

Overview of the Methodology.....	69
Quantitative Analysis.....	69
Mann-Whitney U Test.....	71
Effect Size.....	71
Qualitative Analysis.....	72
Research Hypotheses and Research Questions.....	74
Analysis of Results.....	75
Introduction.....	75
Student Growth.....	78
Passing Core Classes.....	78
Days Absent.....	82
Short Term and Long Term Suspensions.....	82
Qualitative Analysis.....	84
Focus Group Discussion.....	84
School Administrator Interviews.....	99
Church Missions Pastor Interview.....	106
Summary.....	108
Chapter 5: CONCLUSION.....	110
Overview.....	110
Summary of Related Research.....	110
Impact of Community Involvement on Student Achievement and Attendance.....	112
Impact of Community Involvement on Student Discipline.....	113
School and Faith-Based Partnerships.....	114

Organization of the Study.....	115
Nature of the Study.....	116
Research Hypotheses and Research Questions.....	117
Context of the Study.....	118
Demographics of the Study District and the Study School.....	118
Demographics of the School in this Study.....	119
Uplift Mentor Program.....	119
Participants in the Study.....	120
Analysis of Results.....	120
Conclusions.....	121
Research Hypothesis 1.....	121
Research Hypothesis 2.....	121
Research Hypothesis 3.....	122
Research Hypothesis 4.....	122
Research Question 1.....	123
Research Question 2.....	123
Research Question 3.....	124
Assumptions of the Study.....	125
Limitations of the Study.....	126
Implications and Recommendations.....	128
Significance of the Study.....	128
Research Body.....	129
Policy Implications for Educational Leaders.....	129

Needs for Further Research.....	130
Summary.....	132
REFERENCES.....	135
APPENDIX A: THE WCPSS BOARD OF EDUCATION VOLUNTEER POLICY 5422 RELATED R&P.....	145
APPENDIX B: WCPSS ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP MOU.....	148
APPENDIX C: UPLIFT MENTOR PROGRAM FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS.....	152
APPENDIX D: UPLIFT MENTOR PROGRAM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	154
APPENDIX E: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLES.....	157
APPENDIX F: APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH STUDY TO WCPSS.....	159
APPENDIX G: LETTER ASKING TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP.....	164
APPENDIX H: LETTER ASKING MENTORS TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP.....	166
APPENDIX I: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL.....	168
APPENDIX J: WCPSS APPROVAL OF RESEARCH LETTER.....	170

LIST OF TABLES

1. Six Types of Collaboration among School, Family, and Community Partnerships.....	24
2. A Framework for Effective Partnerships.....	27
3. Key Barriers to Successful Partnerships.....	28
4. A Framework for Establishing Partnerships.....	29
5. Advocacy Coalition Framework.....	41
6. Policy Implications and Policy Development Suggestions.....	45
7. Demographic Characteristics of Uplift Mentor Program Participants (N = 35).....	56
8. Demographic Characteristics of Control Group (N = 35).....	57
9. Study Participant Selected Sub-group Data Analysis.....	77
10. Results for Mann-Whitney U Test and Pooled Cohen D Effect Size.....	79
11. Number of Courses Taken and Passed in SY 2009-10 and SY 2010-11.....	81

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

For many years, school leaders have hesitated to engage in partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations because of their concern with violating separation of church and state guidelines. This sentiment dates back to a letter penned by Thomas Jefferson to the Danbury Baptists in the State of Connecticut in which Jefferson (1802) asserted that in order to protect the will of the people those who chose to govern must "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof"-- thus building a wall of separation between Church and State (Benzanson, 2006). Under the administrations of President Bush and President Obama, the White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships has legitimately supported the use of tax dollars to support collaborative relationships between church and state so long as the partnership serves the public interest. It was indicated on the White House administrative website that these partnerships should serve to meet the needs of the country's citizens. The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships encouraged partnerships between government agencies and non-profit organizations including faith-based organizations (About the Office, available at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp/about>). This administrative direction clarified that the "wall of separation" no longer blocked formal partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations. However, there remained the requirement to ensure that when creating partnerships, there was no preference given to any particular faith-based organization.

As the Senior Advisor for the Nonprofit Partnerships Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships with the U.S. Department of Education, Robbins (2011) noted that partnerships between faith and community organizations have been shown to boost attendance, improve behavior, and achieve measurable gains in learning. Robbins also indicated that his

office has not conducted research that specifically addressed the impact of partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations on student achievement (M. Robbins, personal communication, September 22, 2011).

Historically, school leaders and church leaders have tended to focus on the concept of separation of church and state and hesitated to engage in partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations. Joyce Epstein, director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, asserted that there is longstanding research on school partnerships with community agencies. While faith-based organizations have been included in these partnerships, Epstein noted that less research is available specifically addressing the impact of school and faith-based organization partnerships on student achievement. Epstein noted that studies on the impact of faith-based partnerships on student success were needed (J. Epstein, personal communication, November 18, 2010). As school systems continued to invest energy and resources in developing and maintaining partnerships among schools and community organizations, including faith-based organizations, it was important to determine the impact of these partnerships on student academic success and behavioral outcomes.

Statement of the Problem

Since the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Partnerships, partnerships among school systems and faith-based organizations have increased. A limited amount of research has been conducted to determine whether or not these partnerships have had a positive impact on student academic success. Existing literature provided examples of partnerships and suggestions for establishing partnerships. The problem addressed in this study was the need to know more about the perceived effectiveness and impact of these partnerships on student academic and behavioral success. School system district level

leadership, school level leadership and faith-based organization leadership could benefit from evidence that these partnerships have positively impacted student academic and behavioral outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived effect of faith-based mentorship on student academic and behavioral success by examining the impact of a specific partnership--the Uplift Mentor Program partnership--a faith-based partnership with a high school in the Wake County Public School System in North Carolina. The Uplift Mentor Program was developed by faculty at Millbrook High School and members of Crossroads Fellowship Church with a goal of improving student academic and behavioral success. The study sought to determine whether students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program experienced more academic and social gains than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the Uplift Mentor Program. A mixed methods approach using qualitative and quantitative data was used for the study because little is known about the impact of faith based partnerships on student success. Using qualitative data enriches quantitative information by providing personal perceptions gained by administrators and teachers about the program. To gain these perceptions, the study included a focus group and interviews with school administrators, church leaders, and church mentors. The study also sought to add to the literature related to the impact of school partnerships with faith-based organizations on student academic and social outcomes.

Significance of the Study

This study had implications for educational leaders as they continued to examine the potential of partnerships with faith-based organizations to contribute to student academic and behavioral success. While there was research on school and community partnerships, the

research on partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations was more limited. Therefore, it was evident that these type of partnerships needed further study. In order to be successful, partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations should focus on student academic and behavioral success and must not allow faith-based organizations to proselytize. Boston (2009) noted that “most public school officials wanted to do the right thing and realized that pushing religion was not among their duties, but a few would not accept that and insisted on bringing proselytism into the classroom” (p. 7). Schools wanted churches to help, and churches wanted to help schools with student success. Garland, Myers, and Wolfer (2008) pointed out that “congregations often work collaboratively, sending their members as volunteers to serve through community organizations and service coalitions” (p. 1). However, school leaders must always remember that student success may not be the goal of agencies desiring partnership but some partners get involved with schools with different goals, objectives, and desired outcomes (Coburn, Bae, & Turner, 2008). The regulation clearly stated that the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships was established to reach out to faith-based organizations to help schools be successful and help governmental social service agencies be more efficient, not to help churches lead families and children to a religious orientation. Continuing research was needed to identify positive and effective models of school and community partnerships, especially school partnerships with faith-based organizations. School systems could benefit from lessons learned in studies of the impact of faith-based partnerships on student academic and behavioral outcomes. Additionally, the review of literature included in this study identified policy implications for district level leadership who sought to develop or encourage partnerships with faith-based organizations.

Research Question and Research Hypotheses

The study examined the perceived effect of faith-based mentoring on student academic and behavioral success. Students participating in the Millbrook High School Uplift Mentor Program were compared to a similar demographic sample of students who did not participate in the program to determine if North Carolina End of Course exam growth scores as measured by the North Carolina State ABCs, (General Assembly of North Carolina, 1983), core course passing rates; which according to Powell (n.d.), is considered passing at the Millbrook High School at a rate of at least 70%, and attendance showed improvement while in-office discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions from school decreased. The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved growth targets on the NC End of Course exams more than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
2. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a higher passing rate of core classes than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
3. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a lower number of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the program.
4. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had fewer absences in school than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.

Secondly, a focus group was also conducted with all teachers and mentors participating in the study to gather personal experiences with the Uplift Mentor Program as well as their perception of improved student attitude towards school. School administrators and church leaders were interviewed separately to gather this information.

Overview of Methodology

A mixed-method approach using qualitative and quantitative data was used to gather information for this study. A mixed methods approach using qualitative and quantitative data was used for the study because little is known about the impact of faith-based partnerships on student achievement and the perceptions of school based staff of the impact of these partnerships. Quantitative data was gathered from secondary data sources within the study district and study school's official reports (i.e., WCPSS Annual School Discipline Report and NC School Report Card). As noted earlier, using qualitative data enriches quantitative information by providing personal perceptions gained by administrators and teachers about the program. The study included a focus group and interviews with school administrators, church leaders, and church mentors. First, a comparison was conducted between two groups of ninth through twelfth grade students with similar demographic backgrounds. The mentor program group consisted of those students who participated in the Uplift Mentoring Partnership; the control group consisted of students with similar demographic backgrounds who did not participate in the Uplift Mentoring Program. The study analyzed North Carolina standardized End of Course (EOC) test performance prior to and after participating in the program. The study analyzed student passing rate of core classes prior to and after participating in the program. Additionally, the study examined the number of office referrals and subsequent suspensions prior to and after participating in the program, as well as the number of absences from school prior to

and after participating in the Uplift Mentoring Program. This study examined the difference between the groups. The researcher used the Mann-Whitney U Test, a non-parametric measure, to analyze the data. The Mann-Whitney U Test is a non-parametric test which does not rely on normal distribution and is used to compare two independent groups of sampled data. The Mann-Whitney U Test makes no assumptions about the distribution normality of the data (Pallant, 2007).

This study examined what perceived impact the faith-based partnership had on student academic and behavioral outcomes. The target academic outcome was increased growth on the NC EOC exams and an increased passing rate of core classes. The target behavioral outcomes of the partnership were increased attendance, reduction of office discipline referrals, and reduction of suspensions. The hypotheses and the research questions were designed to examine whether students who participated in this partnership had higher outcomes than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate. The following three research questions guided preparation of the focus group questions and interview questions.

1. To what extent did teachers of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?
2. To what extent did mentors of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?
3. To what extent did school administrators and church leaders who worked with the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

Definition of Terms

North Carolina End of Course Test (EOC) –The North Carolina End-of-Course Tests are used to sample a student’s knowledge of subject-related concepts as specified in the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and to provide a global estimate of the student’s mastery of the material in a particular content area. The North Carolina End-of-Course tests were initiated in response to legislation passed by the North Carolina General Assembly – the North Carolina Elementary and Secondary Reform Act of 1984 (General Assembly of North Carolina, 1983). Students enrolled in the following courses are required to take the North Carolina EOC tests: Algebra I, Biology, and English I (Retrieved from <http://www.dpi.state.nc.us/accountability/testing/eoc/>).

Partnership – “A collaborative relationship between entities to work toward shared objectives through mutually agreed division of labor” as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Intermediary Development Series Establishing Partnerships (Dare Mighty Things Inc., n.d).

FBO – faith-based organization –As defined by the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Partnerships, faith-based organizations are “organizations that engage in explicitly religious activities including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization” (Executive Order -- Fundamental Principles and Policymaking Criteria for Partnerships with Faith-Based and Other Neighborhood Organizations, retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/11/17/executive-order-fundamental-principles-and-policymaking-criteria-partner>).

For purposes of this study, a faith-based organization is a church, synagogue, mosque, or temple.

Faith-based partnership - The White House Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships works to build bridges between the federal government and nonprofit organizations, both secular and faith-based, to better serve Americans in need. The Office advances this work through 11 Agency Centers across government and a Strategic Advisor at the Corporation for National and Community Service. As it relates to funding from the federal government, organizations that engage in explicitly religious activities (including activities that involve overt religious content such as worship, religious instruction, or proselytization) must perform such activities and offer such services outside of programs that are supported with direct Federal financial assistance (including through prime awards or sub-awards), separately in time or location from any such programs or services supported with direct Federal financial assistance, and participation in any such explicitly religious activities must be voluntary for the beneficiaries of the social service program supported with such Federal financial assistance (Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships, definition of “secular and faith-based” partnerships, retrieved from <http://www.whitehouse.gov/administration/eop/ofbnp>).

For purposes of this study, the faith-based partnership is the collaborative relationship between Millbrook High School and Crossroads Fellowship Church which is called the Uplift Mentor Program.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to this study. First, students were chosen by the school administration to participate in the partnership. Therefore students were not randomly assigned to the mentor program group or to the control group. This selection of students for the mentor

program group by the school administration made the study less objective and thus the results were less able to be generalized to a larger population. An additional limitation was that End of Course exams were not administered for every course at the high school level. Therefore, not all students were enrolled in an EOC course during the time period of this study. As a result, an exact match for the comparison groups was not possible within the scope of this study. The data used for this study were secondary data; therefore, the study included data that were already collected by the Wake County Public School System Evaluation and Research Department. An additional limitation was that student data were not identifiable; therefore, it was not possible to determine whether any of the student participants were members of the Crossroads Fellowship Church. If some of the students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program were members of the Crossroads Fellowship Church, it was possible that the students could demonstrate improved academic and behavioral outcomes to please their missions pastor. Additionally, the perception of the mentors as to whether or not the students had an improved attitude about school could be biased. Another limitation was that students took different EOC courses from year to year and their performance on the EOC test could not be solely attributed to their participation in the program. It was not possible to determine whether improved performance on EOC tests was due to participation in the mentoring program, classroom instruction, and/or other factors. It was not possible to establish a causal relationship between improved EOC scores and participation in the Uplift Mentor Program. Similarly, all students attending Millbrook High School may have received independent mentoring and tutoring through programs other than the Uplift Mentor Program, which may have influenced student outcomes. Therefore, the pre-program EOC results may not have a direct relationship to the post-program results. Contributing to this limitation in the study was the change in North Carolina's state testing program which required that high

school students take end of course exams only in Algebra I, Biology, and English I. As a result of this change, the EOC exams that each cohort of students took varied significantly from school year to school year. The variation in EOC exams taken limited the ability to compare the improvement on the exact EOC test exams for students for school years prior to participating in the Uplift Mentor Program and after participating.

Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation was divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduced the study and provided a statement of the problem, purpose and significance of the study, the overarching research question, and definition of the key terms as well as the limitations and assumptions of the study. Chapter 2 situated the dissertation in current literature on school, family, and community partnerships, including school partnerships with faith-based organizations. The literature review discussed effective partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations. The literature review was broadened to include the increase in school-community partnerships, examples of and suggestions for effective partnerships, school district leadership challenges, policy implications and the common themes in the literature around successful partnerships. Chapter 3 described the methodology used to conduct this study, the research design of this study, instrumentation and data collection procedures. Chapter 4 described the analysis of the data and summarized the findings of the study. Finally, Chapter 5 presented conclusions and implications of the findings for school, district, and state educational leaders as well as implications for further study.

CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Conceptual Framework and Overview

The purpose of this literature review was to synthesize the current literature and research on effective school, family, and community partnerships, including school and district partnerships with faith-based organizations. First, the literature revealed the increase in school and community partnerships. Secondly, the literature revealed a few examples of effective partnership models between schools and faith-based organizations, and this study examined the extent to which these efforts led to successful partnerships for school-aged children and youth and suggestions for successful partnerships. Thirdly, some common themes in the literature around partnerships between school systems and faith-based organizations were discussed. Lastly, the study explained how school leaders can develop best practices and explore new models for partnering with faith-based organizations. As a part of this discussion, some of the leadership challenges and policy implications for school systems were identified in this study. Since there existed a lot of research on school and community partnerships but a more limited amount of research on school and faith-based organization partnerships, it was evident that this arena of partnerships needed further study. In general there was a renewed interest in school and community partnerships, which is discussed in the next section.

Increase in School and Community Partnerships

Over the last few decades, many scholars have renewed their focus on the promise of school and community partnerships. Sanders (2001) identified ten major categories of community partners: (a) businesses/corporations; (b) universities and educational institutions; (c) government and military agencies; (d) health care organizations; (e) faith organizations; (f) national service and volunteer organizations; (g) senior citizen organizations; (h) cultural and

recreational institutions; (i) other community-based organizations; and (j) individuals in the community. School systems can partner with any of these organizations as school leaders seek to improve student achievement and behavior. Sanders and Harvey (2002) noted that this increased interest and focus began as early as 2001, when “schools across the United States partnered with their students’ families and communities to support school improvement efforts and student success” (p. 1,347). Additionally, as early as 2001, Glasman and Crowson (2001) discussed a general rejuvenation of interest in school-community and school-family relations. Glasman and Crowson (2001) further pointed out “that the back-to-the-neighborhoods phenomenon had been rediscovered and the notion of parents as active and necessary partners in improving school achievement continued to gather momentum and scholarly attention” (p. 2). They noted that the “back to the neighborhood phenomenon” was a return to neighborhood schooling and a move away from desegregation that had been ordered through the courts. Glasman and Crowson (2001) noted that this momentum continued to grow in the early 2000s as this “back-to-the-neighborhood” movement included a “solid rejuvenation of interest in school-community and school-family relations” (p. 1). They noted however, that “relations between schools and their neighborhood constituents remained inadequately examined and understood” (Glasman & Crowson, 2001, p. 1). Later in 2008, school districts engaged in instructional reform to improve instruction in schools and began to reach out to external service providers to assist the school systems in the reform of instruction in schools (Coburn et al., 2008). Historically, school systems have benefited from partnerships with outside agencies to increase capacity and improve access to research-based resources (Coburn et al., 2008; Gamoran, Anderson, Quiroz, Secada, Williams, & Ashmann, 2003; Kerr, Marsh, Ikemoto, Darilek, & Barney, 2006; Marsh, Kerr, Ikemoto, Darilek, Suttorp, Zimmer & et al., 2005). School systems

have faced enormous budget reductions. In spite of limited funding, they have had to continue improving student academic outcomes. To continue student academic improvement schools gained a renewed interest in community involvement. Schools viewed community agencies as viable sources of needed resources to support school improvement efforts, student learning, and school referendums (Sanders & Lewis, 2005). Sanders and Lewis (2005) further stated that there had been more renewed interest in elementary schools than in high schools. Mere size and complexity of high schools contributed to this lag in increased interest. Not only were partnerships between schools and community organizations important to student academic learning, but also to the alleviation of nonacademic barriers (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Bean, Flaspohler, Boone & Kwiatkowski, 2008). Collectively, nonacademic barriers were identified by several researchers as “developmental risk factors such as emotional and behavioral problems, unmet basic needs for good nutrition, involvement with antisocial peers, unstable housing, inadequate family supporters and family conflict” (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Early & Vonk, 2001; Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001).

Although research existed about school-community partnerships (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008; Cnaan & Boddie, 2002; Dixit, 2002; Friend, 2000; Sinha, 2006), it was also noted as early as 2001 that a striking gap persisted which explored partnerships between public schools and faith-based organizations (Shirley, 2001). Shirley (2001) noted “there was evidence that congregations could be powerful allies with schools in the struggle to provide a safe environment for urban youth and to provide them with a high-quality education” (p. 227). Understanding this renewed interest in the impact of school and community agency partnerships on student academic success and the impact on behavioral outcomes, this study now provides some insight into the impact of community involvement and faith-based relationships with schools on student

achievement and attendance as well as some key examples of effective school and faith-based model partnerships.

Impact of Community Involvement on Achievement and Improved Attendance

Family and community involvement in schools was linked strongly to improvements in academic achievement of students, better school attendance, and improved school programs and quality (Michael, Dittus, & Epstein 2007). Westmoreland, Rosenbert, Lopez and Weiss (2009) stated that research suggested that family engagement promoted a range of benefits for students, including improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation. Sheldon (2003) noted in an earlier study that the degree to which schools were working to overcome challenges to family and community involvement predicted higher percentages of students scoring at or above satisfactory on state achievement tests. He suggested further that schools' efforts to involve families and the community in students' learning may have been a useful approach to help students achieve in school, especially for students in early elementary grades (Sheldon, 2003). The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University conducted a study in March 2008 called Project Appleseed. This study found that community organizing efforts were helping to develop a new capacity in schools and were critical to the creation of successful learning environments. Annenberg's research found evidence of improved student outcomes through higher student attendance, higher test scores, and increased graduation rates and college-going aspirations (Mediratta, Shah, McAlister, Fruchter, Mokhtar, & Lockwood (2008). One research project showed that subject-specific practices of school, family, and community partnerships may help educators improve students' mathematics skills and achievement (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). Sanders and Herting (2000) found that students' perception of teacher and parental academic

support and church involvement indirectly influenced achievement through their positive and significant influences on students' academic self-concepts and school behaviors. In 2002, Henderson and Mapp examined 31 cases to demonstrate the relationship between student achievement and community involvement. Their studies indicated that in general school-family-community partnerships were more likely to increase student achievement. "When schools, families, and community groups worked together to support learning, children tended to do better in school, stayed in school longer, and liked school more" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7). Henderson and Mapp (2002) also found that schools that succeed in engaging families from very diverse backgrounds shared some common characteristics. These schools built and maintained trusting and collaborative relationships between teachers, families and the community; recognized, addressed and respected cultural differences; and they shared power and responsibility in their partnerships with families and the community. According to Ceperley (2005), family involvement positively impacted academic success and attendance.

Epstein and Sheldon (2002) studied the relationship between absenteeism and community partnerships. They found that family-school-community partnership practices predicted an increase in daily attendance, a decrease in chronic absenteeism, or both. Especially in the elementary school, they found that partnerships increased student achievement. In their study, Epstein and Sheldon (2002) also found that absenteeism increased in schools with a high percentage of students eligible for free or reduced lunch, for students who did not have a home, and for students who lived at least a mile or more away from home. Ding and Sherman (2006) found that student interaction with the teacher impacted the learning outcome. Therefore, if students were not attending school the opportunity for interaction was decreased and their poor attendance impacted academic success. Paredes and Ugarte (2009) found that academic

performance decreased when a student was absent nine days during the academic year. They found specifically that performance was reduced by 23%. They also found that it was important to examine thresholds to make a direct correlation between attendance and a decrease in performance. These authors found a statistically significant breakpoint at thirteen absences at which point student performance decreased. Sheldon and Epstein (2004) found that school-family-community partnership practices can significantly decrease absenteeism. Roby (2004) reported from a study in Ohio schools that there was a significant relationship between student attendance and student achievement at the fourth, sixth, ninth, and twelfth grade levels. He further reported a stronger correlation between attendance and achievement at the ninth grade level and in the elementary grades. Bafle (2010) noted that greater learning, a brighter future, less delinquency, and more funds for schools were among the benefits to increased attendance. In addition, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) (n.d.) reported that “the school system needs the active support and participation of parents, students, the community, law enforcement, and business to provide effective prevention and early intervention for youth at risk of truancy” (p. 8).

Impact of Community Involvement on Student Discipline

Over the past decade, several scholars have pointed out the link between community collaboration with schools and improvement in student behavior. In a longitudinal study, Sheldon and Epstein (2002) found that students were disciplined fewer times when being sent to the principal’s office, receiving detentions or suspensions when family and community engagement was implemented. Additionally, Sheldon and Epstein found that stronger connections and cooperation between the school, families and the community contributed to improved student behavior in school. They also found that quality partnerships contributed to

fewer discipline infractions by students. According to Ceperley (2005), family involvement positively impacted behavior which also indirectly impacted academic achievement. Similar to early work in this area, Michael et al. (2007) found that family and community involvement was associated with improved student behavior and school discipline. Westmoreland et al. (2009) concluded that family engagement promoted better social skills and behavior in students. Research clearly supported the notion that community partnerships positively impacted student discipline. However, the research was more limited as to the specific impact of school and faith-based partnerships on student discipline. This study sought to contribute to the literature on the impact of faith-based organization mentoring and tutoring on school discipline.

School and Faith-Based Partnerships

According to Colgan (2001), the number of partnerships between school districts and faith-based organizations increased during the ten year period from 1991 to 2001 from 3 to 43%. Over the last few decades, many scholars have renewed their focus on the promise of school and community partnerships to include faith-based partnerships. Barry, Sutherland, and Harris (2006) conducted a study designed to assess how a faith-based prevention model impacted elementary school, middle school, and high school youths' views on risk factors. The factors studied included accessibility to alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, academic achievement, self-concept, peer behavior, and interactions between parent and child. Similar to this study, the researchers assessed student views of the risk factor of academic achievement. Their study indicated that there is promise for faith-based interventions and confirmed the notion that a faith-based community can effectively implement a program to impact youth academic success. Investigators found that the program they studied significantly impacted each risk factor

positively. Their results suggested that a faith-based prevention model can positively affect participating youth.

Colleges and universities have also increased partnerships with faith-based communities to help students have academic success. Timmermans and Booker (2006) found that a precollege program offered in partnership with urban churches was able to help at-risk young people persist in middle and high school and eventually enter some form of postsecondary education. Recently the Houston Independent School District has developed a strategic plan for engaging faith-based organizations in supporting student achievement. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) recognized that faith-based communities have played and must continue to play an essential role in educating children and creating a college-bound culture on each campus. HISD sought to maintain and develop more education partnerships with the faith-based community, as it does with businesses and other community groups. The district felt that faith-based organizations are in a critical position to help improve the quality of education for HISD students. HISD felt that the possibilities are infinite (Allen & Allen, 2011).

Interest in faith-based partnerships began as early as 2002 at the federal government level. Gibelman and Gelman (2002) noted that The 1996 Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWOR) (PL 104-193) significantly boosted efforts to expand service delivery by creating market competition. The U.S. House of Representatives opened the doors for federal, state, and local government entities “to involve religious and other private organizations in the delivery of welfare services to the greatest extent possible; further authorizing States to administer and provide family assistance services through contracts with charitable, religious, or private organizations or through vouchers or certificates that may be redeemed for services at charitable, religious, or private organizations” (as cited in Gibelman &

Gelman, 2002, p. 51). This provision came to be known as charitable choice, giving religious groups the ability to compete for government contracts and thereby opened the door to nontraditional providers, such as congregations (Gibelman & Gelman, 2002). During his administration former President George W. Bush encouraged a new philosophy and mindset on the part of government. He encouraged the government agencies to honor and not restrict faith-based and community efforts. He encouraged government to be the supporter, enabler, catalyst and collaborator for these organizations (Carlson-Thies, 2009). Prior to this new philosophy by former President George W. Bush, over a decade ago, Sanders (1998) found that “students’ perceptions of teacher and parental academic support and church involvement indirectly influenced achievement through their positive and significant influences on students’ academic self-concepts and school behaviors” (p. 385).

Models of School and Faith-Based Partnerships

Two prominent case studies served as model examples of effective school and church partnerships. Shirley (2001) presented case studies on two schools that worked productively with faith-based organizations to improve academic achievement in low-income communities serving children of color. The first school, Morningside Middle School in Fort Worth, Texas, was ranked 20th of the 20 middle schools in Fort Worth on Texas' standardized test in 1985. The new principal of the school visited the churches in the community on Sunday morning and knocked on doors with a cry for help to improve the school. Local ministers rallied to the call and increased parental involvement. Other community organizations such as Industrial Areas Foundation (IAF) collaborated with the churches and the school to help the school identify successful outcomes. The home visits and subsequent assemblies gradually changed Morningside from a school with no ties to the community to a fulcrum of parental engagement

(Shirley, 2001). The middle school had moved from dead-last in achievement on the Texas standardized test to a ranking of third place among Fort Worth's 20 middle schools. In just two years, the percentage of students passing the reading, writing, and math sections of the test had more than doubled – moving from 34% in 1986 to 71% in 1988. Previously, half of the students had been failing one subject; in 1988, only 6% were in that category.

The second school was Sam Houston Elementary School in McAllen, Texas. In the early 1990s, Shirley (2001) reported that Sam Houston also served a low-income community and described the school as one with low test scores. The difference between Morningside and Sam Houston was that Sam Houston Elementary School served predominately Mexican American students due to its proximity to the Mexican border. Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Church was where most of the residents attended church. Again, the IAF was involved with establishing this partnership between Sam Houston Elementary and Saint Joseph the Worker Catholic Church. According to Shirley (2001), Father Bart Flaar became an important liaison between the church and the community, as he often set up meetings in the homes of the parishioners. As the liaison, Father Flaar faced initial opposition from government agencies, including the mayor because he did not support the efforts of a community organization called Valley Interfaith. In spite of the opposition, Father Flaar continued to pursue success outcomes for the school by increasing parental involvement as well as holding rallies in the streets and assemblies in the school with the principal. In this model, the focus was on increasing community involvement at Sam Houston Elementary School. In the spring of 1998, the students' academic achievement on the state's standardized test was so high that the school was rated "exemplary," the highest designation in Texas's school accountability system (Shirley, 2001).

Suggestions for Model Partnerships between Schools and Faith-Based Organizations

According to former Education Secretary, Rod Paige, faith-based and community groups have a strong track record – often developed on a shoestring budget – of helping communities and community members succeed - emphasizing that “it is critical that we all join forces to ensure that no child is left behind” (“Faith based groups”, January 2003). The Education Department had in later years provided clarity on faith-based organizations’ role in after-school grants. The 21st Century Community Learning Centers initiative provided grants to support after-school programs. Formerly it was a competitive grant program, but in later years it funneled money to states on a formula basis, and states could then offer competitive sub-grants to local schools and organizations (“ED Clarifies,” March 2003). Sanders and Harvey (2002) identified the following four factors that allowed schools to “build bridges to the community: (1) the school’s commitment to learning; (2) the principal’s support and vision for community involvement; (3) the school’s receptivity and openness to community and involvement; and (4) the school’s willingness to engage in two-way communication with potential community partners about their level and kind of involvement” (p. 1,345).

Cnaan and Boddie (2002) noted that many faith-based organizations refused to provide social services under contract with the government out of fear they would lose their independence as religious organizations. For a model partnership, one way to circumvent this would have been to channel government resources dedicated to support services provided by faith-based organizations through public schools and nonprofit organizations which demonstrated partnerships with faith-based organizations (Shirley, 2001). The issue of financial management and management in general had been an area of concern with faith-based partnerships and federal funding. The use of untested and inexperienced faith-based groups to

provide social services suggested the need to maintain and even enhance accountability to ensure these groups effectively carried out public deeds. As early as 2000, ensuring faith-based groups integrity to purpose and their capacity to provide social services was important to everyone. The government wanted to transfer some of its functions to faith-based groups; the faith-based groups wanted to protect their reputations; and the citizens wanted charities to do what they were supposed to in an effective manner (Sins of the Secular Missionaries, 2000). Salamon's study (as cited in Gibelman & Gelman, 2002) highlighted the fact that faith-based groups providing good works under church auspices did not mean that the faith-based group did not need to be accountable to anybody. Therefore, the research seemed to support the notion that failure to establish efficient and effective fiscal management can be a downfall in public and faith-based partnerships. When fiscal challenges occurred, the partnership may have failed and consequently, the students were the ones who lost in this scenario. Model partnerships that involved receiving government funds or private funds had to ensure that the fiscal agent for the grant had procedures in place that could sustain and support an external audit. Many school systems have chosen to serve as the fiscal agent when partnering with a community agency on a grant. The school system normally had a larger finance department and grants department than most community and faith-based organizations and also had a greater capacity to manage the volume of fiscal paperwork involved with federal grants and reporting. To ensure effectiveness, a framework for partnerships and the collaboration process was needed.

The typology of collaboration as described by Epstein, Simon, Salinas, and Voorhis (2002) provided a framework for all types of collaboration within partnerships that existed between schools, families and communities – making partnering more formal, capable of assessing the needs, processes and outcomes of any collaborative (see Table 1).

Table 1

Six Types of Collaboration among School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Collaboration Type	Description
Parenting	Assist families with parenting skills, family support, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for children.
Communicating	Communicate with families about school programs and student progress. Create two-way communication channels between school and home.
Volunteering	Improve recruitment, training, activities, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and as audiences at the school or in other locations. Enable educators to work with volunteers who support students and the school.
Learning at Home	Involve families with their children in academic learning at home, including homework, goal setting, and other curriculum-related activities. Encourage teachers to design homework that enables students to share and discuss interesting tasks.
Decision-Making	Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy activities through school councils or improvement teams, committees, and parent organizations.
Collaborating with the Community	Coordinate resources and services for families, students, and the school with community groups, including businesses, agencies, cultural and civic organizations, and colleges or universities. Enable all to contribute service to the community.

Note. (Epstein et al., 2002).

Effective partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations may contribute to the academic and behavioral success of schools and enhance learning for children. A school's commitment to learning and a partnership focus on learning was key (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Sanders and Harvey (2002) further found in their case study school that "according to its community partners, the school's visible commitment to students' learning was one of the key factors that attracted them to the school and kept them involved" (p. 1,359). Ineffective partnerships have the potential to turn into collaborative disasters, politically and socially. As a model program, schools can replicate the collaboration that occurred in the partnership with the Philadelphia schools, which reached out to faith groups for help with tutoring students. The chief executive officer of the Philadelphia schools wanted each of the city's 265 public schools to have a strong partnership with a local faith-based organization. To promote that vision, Paul G. Valla visited churches on Sundays, welcoming after-school prayer and choir groups, and calling on synagogues and mosques to work more closely with schools (Gehring, 2004). Mr. Valla insisted that the partnerships were carefully tailored, and that activities such as after-school prayer groups were legally protected if they were voluntary and not sponsored by schools. Done properly, such partnerships could benefit schools, he said. But executed poorly, they could violate the First Amendment's ban on a government establishment of religion and be a "nightmare" for administrators, he cautioned (Gehring, 2004). The key to successful partnerships was to make sure the intended outcome was educational success for students and not opportunity for faith-based organizations to proselytize. Congregations often worked collaboratively, sending their members as volunteers to serve through community organizations, and service coalitions (Garland et al., 2008). Garman, Hammann, Hoodak, Fiume, Manino-Corse and Wise (2000), conducted research on a collaborative partnership that used information

technology resources to improve and increase access to learning opportunities for a student population that was highly transient, socio-economically disadvantaged, and urban. They found that this partnership had a positive impact on academic success and outcomes (Garman et al., 2000). Schools and school systems needed clarity of focus as they established partnerships. Cooper, Chavira and Mena (2005) offered five critical questions that should be answered for diverse families, schools and communities to support students in school (1) How can we open the academic pipeline across ethnicity, income, and geography? (2) How can we sustain aspirations and expectations of students, families, and teachers? (3) How can we sustain children's math and language learning pathways through school? (4) How can we link families, schools and communities to support children's pathways? (5) How can we sustain educational partnerships for long-term outcomes? Smith, Anderson and Abell (2008) studied the Full-Purpose Partnership School-wide Model and noted that specific curriculum materials should be made available for schools and the community partner. Perhaps Smith, Anderson and Abell were suggesting that without specific curricula guidance, partnerships may not have the intended impact on student academic and behavioral outcomes. As schools and faith-based organizations seek to establish effective partnerships, Cairney's (2000) framework may be helpful to answer critical questions about the partnership (see Table 2).

Dare Mighty Things Incorporated identified some key barriers to successful partnerships which are discussed in the Intermediary Development Series (see Table 3).

The Intermediary Development Series in Establishing Partnerships also identified key components for a successful partnership (see Table 4).

Table 2

A Framework for Effective Partnerships

Concept	Explanation
Content	What information is shared? What is the focus of group discussions, demonstrations, home tasks and so on? What is the stated purpose of the content?
Process	How is information shared? Who acts as the facilitator or leader for any program and how does this person structure opportunities for discussion, observation, etc?
Source	Who has initiated the involvement? Was it a parent, school, community, or government initiative?
Control	Who is in control of the program? Where the program is located (home, school, community building)? How do parents become involved in programs (chosen, selected, parent initiative)?

Note. (Cairney, 2000).

Table 3

Key Barriers to Successful Partnerships

Barriers

Limited vision/failure to inspire

One partner manipulates or dominates, or partners compete for the lead

Lack of clear purpose and inconsistent level of understanding purpose

Lack of understanding roles/responsibilities

Lack of support from partner organizations with ultimate decision-making power

Lack of commitment; unwilling participants

Differences of philosophies and manners of working

Unequal and/or unacceptable balance of power and control

Key interests and/or people missing from the partnership

Hidden agendas

Failure to communicate

Lack of evaluation or monitoring systems

Failure to learn

Financial and time commitments outweigh potential benefits

Too little time for effective consultation

Note. Dare Mighty Things, Inc. (n.d.). Intermediary Development Series, Establishing Partnerships, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/ccf/about_ccf/gbk_ep/ep_gbk_ov.html

Table 4

A Framework for Establishing Partnerships

Key Tasks

Clarity of leadership

Clarity in understanding

Recognize and allow the differences in culture/practice that exist among partners

Ensure clarity of purpose

Ensure a level of ownership and management commitment

Develop and maintain trust

Develop clear partnership working arrangements

Account for performance management

Recognize the opportunity for learning experiences and sharing good practices

Note. Dare Mighty Things, Inc. (n.d.). Intermediary Development Series, Establishing Partnerships, www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ocs/ccf/about_ccf/gbk_ep/ep_gbk_ov.html

The research was clear that Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships intended to reach out to faith-based organizations to help schools be successful and help governmental social service agencies be more efficient, not to help churches lead families and children to a religious orientation. Continued research needs to be done in this area to identify positive and effective models of community and school-based partnerships with the focus being on effective faith-based and school partnerships. Not only is there a need to identify effective models, but a clear need to understand the leadership challenges of partnering with faith-based organizations. The next section of this literature review identifies the common themes found.

Common Themes

In the literature around faith-based partnerships with school systems, several common themes emerged. Specifically, authors continued to discuss the significance of the separation of church and state as well as debated whether faith-based organizations could provide sustainable relationships which improve social engagement. In addition, other authors described faith-based organizations as social service entities. The authors pointed out that the church has served as the cornerstone for communities of color, implementing essential programs to ensure the equitable distribution of public goods and services and the promotion of public programs. And lastly, authors identified the need for accountability, evaluation and outcomes resulting from faith-based partnerships.

Separation of Church and State

Many school leaders thought that this “wall of separation” prohibited them from collaborating with churches, due to the Jeffersonian principle calling for a separation of church and state (Benzanson, 2006). It was noted that considerable debate on what the framers meant has continued for more than two centuries--some pointing out that what was meant by

Jefferson's early writings is that government merely could not establish a national church or state church (Church, 2004). As the relationship between church and state evolved into the 21st century, in practice, scholars began to recognize that the framers never intended to prohibit school leaders from collaborating with faith-based organizations to achieve the greater good (Billingsley, 2003). The "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment means at least this: Neither a state nor the Federal Government can set up a church. Neither can pass laws which aid one religion, aid all religions, or prefer one religion over another (Knippenberg, 2003). As school systems seek to establish partnership and collaborate with faith-based organizations, continued effort will need to be given to clarify exactly what the framers of the constitution meant by "separation of church and state" and not let this issue be a barrier to effective partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations. De Vita and Wilson (2001) found in a survey of participants in the Urban Institute's Center on Nonprofits and Philanthropy and Harvard University's Hauser Center for Nonprofit Organizations Emerging Issues Seminar that survey respondents indicated that there has never been a strict wall separating church and state from working together. Respondents further indicated that they had a long history of partnering together.

Shirley (2001) noted that there are some dangers in faith-based organizations working with schools. McCarthy (2009) stated that religion has been one of the most contentious issues in public education and there were no signs that the disputes will disappear. Educators must know which activities are prohibited and which are protected by law. Shirley (2001) indicated that the most common danger involved alarm or dread that laity or clergy would use the occasion to proselytize. Schools and churches must ensure that proselytizing does not happen if a partnership is to be successful and not bring upon itself serious criticism from the larger

community. Shirley (2001) further stated that, although clergy and laity active in religious institutions may be driven by their faith to work in schools, that faith becomes channeled into educational activities without an overt religious content, easily avoiding the courts' concern with government funding for organizations that were primarily religious.

Faith-Based Organizations as Social Service Entities

The growing provision of public social services via faith-based organizations was evident in the research literature on partnerships with schools. As early as the late 1990s, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) initially paved the way for faith-based organizations to be involved in the provision of social services. At the federal level, Burke, Fossett, and Gais (2004) pointed out that federal resources allocated to support welfare reform through charitable choice no longer excluded faith-based organization from securing support to fund faith-based social services. At the state level, state governments promoted partnerships between states and faith-based organizations, creating faith-based and community initiatives under departments of social services. These governmental structures often served as a clearinghouse for faith-based organizations who were interested in competing for federal grant dollars and provided training and technical assistance for faith-based organizations who were interested in meeting local needs. At the local level, faith-based social services provided culturally and linguistically appropriate services for communities in that they provided essential wrap-around services, promoted essential coalition-building among community partners, and delivered faith-based service programs to meet the cultural needs of the targeted audience (Garland et al., 2008; Ver Wys, 2004). The commitment of staff was evident in faith-based social services. Religious volunteers seemed to be more motivated and were sustained over time more effectively for community services because they were able to make the connection between

their own religious values and volunteer service (Garland et al., 2008). Bositis (2007) stated that black churches in particular were pivotal institutions in African American communities. He noted that the black church provided emphasis on charitable giving, social support, civic engagement and spiritual strength. Based on this emphasis, the black churches could have been likely participants in the Faith-based and Community Initiative (FBCI), established by the Bush administration in January 2001. However, little was actually known at the time about how involved black churches were in this initiative, whether or not black churches wanted to be involved in the initiative, or their ability to meet the requirements for participation. Cavendish as stated in (Barnes, 2004) noted that Protestant and Catholic black churches engaged in social service activities more than white churches.

Dilulio (2009) noted that the whole truth is that America's 'armies of compassion' remained much as Bush described them in his maiden campaign speech in 1999: 'outnumbered and outflanked and outgunned,' needing 'more support, public and private' and forced to 'make bricks without straw.' The whole truth is that religious nonprofits, large and small, national and local, have been struggling harder than ever to meet human needs begotten by increases in poverty and unemployment. (p. 9)

Edwards, Edwards, Jones, and Ham (2009) conducted an evaluation of a Saturday school program and found that church congregations' willingness to make a commitment to the Saturday school intervention demonstrated support on the part of the leaders and the congregants. The members of the congregation felt that they had an obligation to assist children in gaining mastery in their reading and math skills. One challenge all churches faced, whether predominately African-American or Caucasian, was the ability to have clearly identifiable and measurable outcomes for evaluation and accountability.

Accountability, Evaluation and Outcomes

Hendrie (2003) stated that the U.S. Department of Education proposed rules for faith-based organizations. These rules indicated that faith-based organizations that received federal funding to provide educational programs had to keep their religious programs separated from the federal funded programs. However, these faith-based organizations did not need to hide or change their purpose and function as religious organizations. Faith-based providers of tutoring must not discriminate against students on the basis of religion; they were nevertheless not required to give up their religious character or identification to be providers (School Law News 2003). Having accountability in programs can determine the success or failure of a collaborative partnership. Gibelman and Gelman (2002) noted that being part of a faith-based organization does not eliminate the leadership from human weaknesses that other organizations' leaders have. Among faith-based groups, public trust is a key component.

Fagan, Horn, Edwards, Woods, and Caprara (2007) argued for increased accountability through the use of outcome-based evaluation. They noted that accountability within partnerships could occur because: outcome-based evaluation (OBE) had the potential to engender a revolution of increased effectiveness in the faith community and to debunk skeptics' claim that faith-based programs are only about "feel good" results rather than producing solid and measurable impacts. When administered properly, OBE can help to clarify and to fulfill an organization's founding mission and goals, as well as to ensure that the needy are served effectively and that funds are used responsibly. As it helps organizations to do a better job of articulating the distinctive qualities of their outreach, outcome based evaluation provides faith-based ministries with a means of substantiating

their success. . . . it helps faith-based organizations to be more accountable both to those they serve and to those who fund them (p. 1).

In addition, Fagan et al. (2007) noted that faith-based partnerships would benefit from outcome-based evaluations because outcome-based evaluation measures organizational effectiveness in all of the collaborative organizations. Unlike the process-oriented reports of "counts and amounts" that are typically generated by many traditional service providers, Fagan et al. (2007) noted that OBE provides a qualitative element: a description of the impact that services have had on the lives of their recipients--often literal life transformations, demonstrated by changes and improvements in knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, life condition, or life status (p. 5). Not only do faith-based partnerships need focused evaluation procedures but they also need support in implementation of programs. Branch (2002) stated that small to medium sized faith-based organization had the ability to develop strong partnerships with justice department agencies. However, these faith-based organizations needed support to implement comprehensive, intensive programs that impacted the behavior of high risk youth participants. Similarly, to be successful, partnerships between these organizations and schools required the same support for sustained success over time. Some faith-based organizations were turning to agencies such as Compassion Capital Fund to help them be more organized and able to manage grant dollars as well as sustain their support. Abt Associates found that "organizations attribute numerous benefits to the financial, training and technical assistance support they received from CCF-funded intermediaries. Positive results were seen among both faith-based and secular organizations" (Abt Associates, 2007, p. 6).

Educational Leadership Challenges: How Some Superintendents were Dealing with the Leadership Challenges Related to Partnerships with Faith-Based Organizations

Peter C. Gorman, former superintendent of NC Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, turned to faith-based organizations when he sought community support for the district's most challenged schools. He turned to local churches, synagogues, temples, and a mosque for help because he believed the help of the faith community was essential to the success of Charlotte's children and their schools. Gorman started going to different churches, synagogues, temples, and mosques – sometimes taking in three or more services a day in addition to his own – to learn about Charlotte's diverse faith community. What he found was a community yearning to get involved but now knowing how, or worse, not feeling welcome (Carr, 2008).

A few years ago NC's Iredell-Statesville school system had no faith-based partnerships; but grew to 62 faith-based partnerships in 2009. In the Iredell-Statesville school system, area churches brought supplies and mentors to their neighborhood schools; businesses provided everything from speakers and tutors to financial support and internships. Superintendent Terry Holliday stated that the district could not meet the kids' needs without the community partners (Ullman, 2009). Bryan and Henry (2008) noted that school counselors, teachers, other adults, and community members in schools built strengths-based partnerships when they (a) recognized and affirmed the strengths inherent in the children, their families, and communities regardless of their background; and (b) utilized the strengths in the school, families, and community to create assets, resources, and supports that empowered children. Perhaps school systems would be well served to develop policies to guide the development of partnerships with faith-based organizations. However, there existed limited examples of policies in the literature and the related implications.

Policy Implications and Lack of Policy Direction for Schools Engaging in Community Partnerships

In the administration of education policy, the church may be used as a mediating structure to provide social services for communities in need. More importantly, these partnerships may enable schools, families, and communities to work together to serve the needs and interests of children of the school districts. Superintendents and faith-based organizational leaders who are interested in making a bigger impact in the lives of children face important public policy and leadership challenges in order for these partnerships to produce effective and meaningful organizational and educational outcomes. Educators are expected to exercise sound judgment and follow well-established legal principals, and they can be liable for damages if they fail to do so. Ignorance of clearly established law is not a legitimate defense (McCarthy, 2009). While the separation of church and state has continued to dominate the discussion, the courts have provided legal interpretation of this dichotomy. For example DeVita and Wilson (2001) highlighted two Supreme Court cases where the Court provided a more liberal interpretation of the separation of church and state. For example, in *Agostini v. Felton* 1997, states were allowed to provide funding for non-religious services on parochial school campuses. Secondly, in *Mitchell v. Helms* 2000 states were allowed to provide education supplies, materials and computers for non-religious programs on parochial school campuses. DeVita and Wilson (2001) further pointed out that “Justice Sandra Day O’Connor’s concurrence in the *Mitchell v. Helms* case was the decisive vote, and her opinion in this case cautioned that the state may not provide funds for religious indoctrination—a principal that resonated in the debates on faith-based initiatives” (p. 2). Although the literature provided limited examples of policies about faith-based partnerships, some common themes were identified that have implications for partnerships

between school systems and faith-based organizations. These common themes may guide policy development, as well as explain how school leaders can develop best practices and explore new models for partnering with faith-based organizations.

As part of this study of the Uplift Mentor Program at Millbrook High School in Wake County North Carolina, a review of the Wake County Board of Education policy was done to determine if there existed direction and guidance for schools partnering with faith-based organizations. In the Wake County Public School System, there was not a specific Board of Education policy which guided partnerships between the school system and faith-based organizations. However, the two things that did exist were the WCPSS Board of Education Volunteer Policy 5422 and the related Rules & Procedures (R & P) which are attached as Appendix A. The volunteer policy, which was originally written in December 1993 and revised in May 2005, stated that the Board authorized a volunteer program in the school system subject to suitable regulations and safeguards as provided by the Superintendent. This policy addressed volunteers in general and sought to ensure protection for students from volunteers who had committed or had been charged with violations of law that made make them a threat or danger to students. Further, it outlined the processes and procedures for citizens to become volunteers in the school system but did not specifically address prohibition of proselytizing by faith-based volunteers. While this volunteer policy sufficiently addressed general volunteer activity in the school setting, it lacked enough specificity to address the potential issue of proselytizing that may occur when a school collaborates or partners with a faith-based organization. Of particular note were the level 3 and level 4 activities. Level 3 stated that volunteer activity involved direct contact with students under limited supervision by school staff. Level 4 stated that volunteer activity allowed unsupervised contact with student(s) on or off campus. Boards of Education

should be especially concerned with these levels of clearance and activity. Without a policy addressing what conversations can occur with students during authorized on or off campus activity, a volunteer may proselytize a student towards a particular religious persuasion. The activity may occur at a church site, and the students may be provided authorized tutoring or mentoring followed by a religious service at the church to which the students are invited. Thus the volunteer policy protected the district's children from sex offenders and felons, but did little if anything to protect the same children from religious indoctrination; therefore, it may have left the district open to public values scrutiny and accusations that the district did not have a clear separation of church and state.

Although there was no specific board of education policy, a memorandum of agreement had been developed for faith-based partnership between schools and organizations which has been included in Appendix B. As a part of this study, a review was conducted of the memorandum of agreement since there was no other written policy that addressed specific partnerships between faith-based organizations and the schools within the WCPSS. During this study there was not found a written policy on faith-based partnerships for any school system. This is an area for further research. Should school systems develop policy to guide faith-based partnerships with schools, policy writers may be served well to understand the Advocacy Coalition concept as explained by Sabatier and Weible (2007).

The Advocacy Coalition Framework (ACF) was a structure of the policy process developed by Sabatier and Jenkins-Smith (1988) to deal with the many complexities involved in creating or changing policy. The ACF operated within policy subsystems and was composed of participants who regularly sought to influence policy within a particular subsystem (Sabatier, 2007). According to Sabatier and Weible (2007), a subsystem was characterized by both a

functional/substantive dimension (e.g., volunteer and tutors) and a territorial one (e.g., classrooms). The ACF also assumed that participants had a strong set of beliefs and were poised to translate those beliefs into action. Another component considered to be essential in this model was a change in a dynamic factor (socioeconomic conditions, changes in the governing coalition, or policy changes from other subsystems) in order to bring about a significant change in policy (Sabatier & Weible, 2007). The ACF provided a framework to deal with the “wicked problems” as described by Sabatier and Weible (2007) (see Table 5).

“The ACF started with the following three foundation stones: (1) a macro-level assumption that most policy making occurs among specialist within a policy subsystem but that their behavior is affected by factors in the broader political and socioeconomic system; (2) a micro-level “model of the individual” that is drawn heavily from social psychology; and (3) a meso-level conviction that the best way to deal with the multiplicity of actors in a subsystem is to aggregate them into advocacy coalitions” (Sabatier & Weible, 2007, p. 191).

Applications of ACF identified the competing sides of a political debate. It explained belief and policy changes over long periods by providing a theoretical guide that examined the complexities of political conflict and mobilization. ACF identified the properties of policy subsystems, the stable and unstable parameters and the components of policy core beliefs. For example, external system events can interfere with previously relatively stable parameters (changes in public opinion about faith-based partnerships, policy decisions and impacts from other subsystems such as the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships, under the auspices of the Executive Office of the President). As can be seen in these foundational stones, policy makers who favor faith-based partnerships write policy in isolation, but these

Table 5

Advocacy Coalition Framework

Framework

Goal conflicts (same desired outcomes but with differing goals/ways of accomplishing the outcomes);

Technical disputes (policies, rules, procedures conflict) impact policy decisions (e.g. most people want community citizens to volunteer in schools but maybe differ on the rules for certain groups); and

Multiple actors from several levels of government (local, state, and federal) and even actors within the same agencies (which religious group – Christians, Muslims, Atheists, Agnostics – who decides what a faith-based group is – the school system or the government).

Note. (Sabatier & Jenkins-Smith, 1988).

policies may be impacted and possibly derailed once the broader political and socioeconomic advocates voice their views. Additionally, the micro-level aspects from social psychology can cause the individual views of participants to sway how a policy is developed. Lastly, since opinions on whether schools should partner with faith-based organizations may inevitably vary, the path of least resistance for developing effective and efficient partnership policy may be through advocacy coalitions. Additionally, the political context and framework that school districts are in impact the possibility of success for faith-based partnerships with schools.

With the expansion of the U.S. Office of Faith-based Initiatives by President Obama, one might call this a significant event that substantially impacted the increased interest in these partnerships. Punctuated-Equilibrium Theory (PET) explained the stability and change in public policymaking related to faith-based initiatives (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). PET sought to explain a simple observation; political processes were generally characterized by stability and incrementalism, but occasionally they produced large-scale departures from the past. Stasis, rather than crisis, typically characterized most policy areas, but crises do occur (Baumgartner & Jones, 1993). Baumgartner and Jones (1993) found that newcomers were proponents of changes in the status quo, and they often overwhelmed the previously controlling powers. Institutional separation often worked to reinforce conservatism, but it sometimes worked to wash away existing policy subsystems. In the context of the faith-based initiative discussion, former President George W. Bush punctuated the equilibrium when he established the Office of Faith-based Initiatives (OFBI). For a long period of time there was a clear wall of separation between the government and faith-based organizations, thus stasis. The establishment of the OFBI broke this stasis and began a revival of partnerships between government entities and faith-based organizations. Baumgartner and Jones (1993) stated that when an issue moved higher on the

political agenda, it was usually because new participants had become interested in the debate. In *Partnering with Communities of Faith* by Obama for America (2008), results from a Pew report identified that the majority of Americans (66%) favored allowing churches and other faith communities to apply, along with other organizations, for government funding to provide social services. Obama for America advocates pointed out that President Bush came into office with a promise to “rally the armies of compassion.” In addition, then Senator Obama asserted that “faith and values can be the foundation of a new project of American renewal, and that’s the kind of effort he intended to lead as President of the United States” (Obama for America, 2008). As part of his presidential push for faith-based and neighborhood partnerships, then Senator Barack Obama believed that our problems required an “all hands on deck” approach, and that the federal government should enlist effective faith-based and community groups to help solve them (Obama for America, 2008). President Bush and President Obama’s support for faith-based initiatives was a clear demonstration of the punctuated equilibrium theory – new players on the scene driving policy development.

Coburn et al. (2008) suggested that as school leaders develop policy they would be well served to clearly understand the concept of insider-outsider collaboration. Those on the outside of the school needed to understand who on the inside had the authority to make decisions about the collaboration. In insider-outsider partnerships, district leaders have formal authority over the school staff that engage in partnerships and over any initiatives that are developed as a part of the partnership. However, the outsiders do not have any authority over the district or school staffs who are engaged in the partnership (Coburn et al., 2008). Policy needs to clearly define who has the authority to make decisions about partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations

or any other outside organization. Coburn et al. (2008) further stated that conducting frame analysis represents

a set of conceptual tools for investigating the way ideas are produced and invoked to mobilize people to action. It helps us understand the process by which people come to understand the nature of the problem and potential solutions through social interaction and negotiation. Thus, in the case of insider-outsider collaboration, frame analysis helps us understand how directions for joint work get negotiated as individuals from districts work with those from the outside over time. There are two kinds of frames that individuals and groups invoke in their on-going interaction: diagnostic and prognostic framing. Diagnostic framing involves defining problems and attributing blame. How a problem is framed is important because it focuses attention on some aspect of the problem and not others, identifies some individuals or groups as responsible for the problem, and thus identifies those responsible for change. Prognostic framing involves articulating a proposed solution to the problem. In so doing, a prognostic frame puts forth particular goals and suggests tactics for achieving those goals (Coburn et al., 2008, p. 364).

As school leaders develop policy, they would be well served to engage in frame analysis to ensure connection of the values, beliefs, and purposes of those who seek to mobilize resources in a collaborative manner through partnerships. Westmoreland et al. (2009) suggested the following concepts to guide policy development for family involvement. These concepts could also inform development of policies for faith-based partnerships (see Table 6).

Table 6

Policy Implications and Policy Development Suggestions

Implications	Suggestions
Create infrastructure for district-wide leadership for family engagement	Ensure reporting, learning and accountability for family engagement
Build capacity for family engagement through training and technical assistance	Help districts understand, design, and implement strong evaluation strategies

Note. (Westmoreland et al., 2009).

Summary

The research was clear that the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships intended to reach out to faith-based organizations to help schools have academic and behavioral success with students and to help governmental social service agencies be more effective in their support of student academic and behavioral success. The intent of the Office of Faith-Based and Neighborhood Partnerships was not to help churches lead families and children to a religious orientation. Additional research is needed in this area to identify positive and effective models of community and school-based partnerships with the focus being on effective faith-based and school partnerships. In personal communication with Dr. Joyce Epstein, director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Dr. Epstein stated that there are few studies of the effects of one community partner vs. another in part because such comparisons are very difficult to design and measure (J. Epstein, personal communication, November 18, 2010). Therefore, the impact of one partnership versus the impact of a different partnership on student academic and behavioral success is very difficult to measure and demonstrate a casual relationship to the change. The literature was clear that faith-based partnerships could have a far reaching positive impact on student academic and behavioral outcomes. However, these partnerships needed structure, accountability, and clear objectives. As the research is expanded on faith-based partnerships with schools and school systems, it will be interesting to see how policies are developed to guide these relationships since written policy seemed to be limited or even absent at the time of this study. As indicated in the literature review of this study, it was generally accepted that community partnerships had a positive impact on student academic and behavioral outcomes. However, there are remaining unanswered questions about the impact of faith-based partnerships with schools on student learning, student attitude toward school, and

student discipline which this study sought to examine. This study examined the impact that a school-faith-based organization partnership had on student academic and behavioral success. This study sought to contribute to closing the gap in the field of research on these specific school and faith-based partnerships.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Overview

This study examined the impact of a school partnership with a faith-based organization which was designed to provide mentors for students. Standardized test scores, attendance records, and discipline records for students participating in the Millbrook High School Uplift Mentor Program were compared to the standardized test scores, attendance records, and discipline records for a similar demographic sample of students who did not participate in the program to determine if End of Course exam growth scores and attendance showed improvement while in-office discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions from school decreased. The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved growth targets on the NC End of Course exams more than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
2. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a higher passing rate of core classes than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
3. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a lower number of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the program.
4. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had fewer absences in school than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.

Secondly, a focus group was used to gather and evaluate information on how teachers and mentors perceived the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on students. In addition, the focus group was conducted to gather personal experiences of the teachers and mentors with the mentor program. So as not to bias the information collected from the teachers and mentors; administrators were interviewed separately to gather the same type of information gathered from the teachers and mentors. Three research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent did teachers of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?
2. To what extent did mentors of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?
3. To what extent did school administrators and church leaders who worked with the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

Context for the Study

A partnership was established between a faith-based organization and a high school in the Wake County Public School System. The Uplift Mentor Partnership was created by members of the Crossroads Fellowship Church and the faculty of Millbrook High School to “build a supportive and trusting relationship that allows the mentor to guide the student towards personal growth, to help the student experience success in his/her personal life, and to improve the academic performance and attendance in all classes” (Powell, n.d., p. 1).

The program goals focused on four critical components: (1) Academic Improvement; (2) Attendance; (3) Discipline; and (4) Engagement. Specifically, the program objectives focused on improving student academic and behavioral outcomes, reducing absenteeism and improving student engagement with adults. In addition, the measurable outcomes for student improvement were:

1. Students will pass all 4 classes with a score of 70% or better;
2. Students will improve their attendance to no more than 5 unexcused absences in the semester;
3. Students will reduce discipline referrals to no more than 3 per semester; and
4. Students will have met with their mentors at least once a week for as long as they participated in the program (Powell, n.d., p. 1).

The study examined student academic and behavioral outcomes before students began participating in the program (Time 1) and after students enrolled in the program (Time 2). Students who did not participate in the Uplift Mentor Program may have participated in other mentoring programs within the school. However, the scope of this study did not examine this possibility, thus creating a limitation to the study. Specifically, the following outcomes were measured at Time 1 and Time 2:

1. Academic Improvement: Uplift Mentoring students passed all 4 courses with a score of 70% or better compared to students who did not participate in the program; and Uplift Mentor Program students' EOC scale scores (growth) increased after participating in the program at a rate higher than those who did not participate in the program;

2. Attendance: Uplift Mentoring students improved their attendance to no more than 5 unexcused absences in the semester compared to students who did not participate in the program;
3. Discipline: Uplift Mentoring students had a reduction in office discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions compared to students who did not participate in the program; and
4. Engagement: Uplift Mentor Program students met with their mentor at least once a week. This meeting was incorporated within the student schedules for all program participants to ensure student availability. Absences from the school day were the only reason that a student would not be able to meet with the mentor. Since absenteeism was a concern with this identified group of students, students did not have an equal number of days with their respective mentor which created a limitation to the study.

The partnership between WCPSS Millbrook High School and Crossroads Fellowship Church sought to improve academic and behavioral outcomes among students participating in the Uplift Mentoring Program. There has been increased interest in establishing faith-based partnerships with schools (Barry et al., 2006; Carr, 2008; Colgan, 2001). Carr (2008) noted that Peter Gorman, superintendents of Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System stated that “the help of the faith community is essential to the success of our children and our schools” (p. 46).

Description of the District in this Study

The district chosen for the study was a large, urban school district in central North Carolina. The U.S. Department of Education’s National Center for Educational Statistics (Retrieved from <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/urbaned/page2.asp>) defined an “urban” school district

as one in which 75% or more of the households served are in the central city of a metropolitan area. By this definition, there are 575 “urban” school districts in the United States. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) revised its definition of school locale types in 2006. At the time of this study, the system was referred to as the “urban-centric” classification system instead of the previously used “metro-centric” classification system. The four categories used to describe a district’s urbanicity were city, suburban, town and rural. Each of these categories was then divided into three sub-categories which were large, midsize and small.

According to the NCES, North Carolina had two large city school districts, which were Charlotte-Mecklenburg and Wake County. Wake County, the district chosen for this study, was the largest school district in the state of North Carolina and the seventeenth largest in the nation. The school system was served by a nine member board of education comprised of nine districts throughout the county. In addition, the system had one superintendent for the district and seven area superintendents. The district was the second largest employer in the county with over seventeen thousand employees of which ten thousand two hundred and forty-seven were instructional personnel and had an operating budget of over three billion dollars. The district included twelve municipalities and a range of schools within suburban and rural areas. Student enrollment for the 2010-11 school year was 143,289 students. There were 4 new schools added in 2010-11 bringing the totals to 103 elementary, 32 middle, 24 high, and 4 special/optional schools, totaling 163 schools. Wake County offered three different calendar options, year-round and traditional at the elementary level; year-round, traditional, and modified at the middle school level; and traditional and modified at the high school level. The school chosen for this study is a traditional calendar school. In 1982, Wake County Public Schools introduced magnet schools to the district in an effort to improve the “healthiness” of some schools that were seeing a

significant increase in poverty. Schools were provided additional resources, enabling students to participate in unique educational opportunities. Parents of students applied to attend magnet schools, and selection was determined via a lottery. Wake County Public Schools at the time of this study had 22 magnet schools: 19 elementary, 8 middle school, and 5 high schools. The school chosen for this study is one of the five magnet high schools in the district.

Description of the School in this Study

Millbrook High School was the setting for a faith-based partnership between the Wake County Public School System and Crossroads Fellowship Church. Millbrook High School opened the 2010-11 school year seeking authorization to become an International Baccalaureate magnet school. At the time of this study, the school was scheduled to have its authorization visit in October of the 2010-11 school year. Prior to this time, Millbrook was a traditional high school. This school resides within the Raleigh municipality and is located in the north-central region of the district. The enrollment for the 2009-10 school year was 2,432, and in 2010-11 enrollment increased slightly to 2,443. McCracken and Barcinas (1991) described urban schools as schools that were larger, had more teachers, administrators, and support staff; and offered more courses, extra-curricular activities, and were more costly to operate on a per-pupil expenditure basis. McCracken and Barcinas (1991) also noted that urban school student populations tend to have a greater mix of race and cultures which make them more diverse. Millbrook High School, based on this description, qualified as an urban school in 2010-11. As an urban school, Millbrook High School had a diverse population; however, the demographic representation of the students in the Uplift Mentor Program was not representative of the school's overall demographics.

The partnership, Uplift Mentor Program, had been operating at Millbrook High School since spring 2008. The overall goal of the partnership was to provide mentors to high school students who were at risk of school failure. In this partnership, students served by this program were at risk of school failure, due to excessive absenteeism, frequent school suspensions and poor academic performance. The vision of the Uplift Mentor partnership at Millbrook High School was “to build supportive and trusting relationships that allowed the mentor to guide the student towards personal growth, to help the student experience success in his/her personal life, and to improve the academic performance and attendance in all classes” (Uplift Mentoring Program, Millbrook High School, available at <http://mhs.wcpss.net/upliftmentoring/index.html>).

Student participation in this program required that high school students at Millbrook High School meet weekly with a mentor during the student’s regularly scheduled lunch period. In an effort to engage the student toward developing a supporting and trusting relationship with the mentor, he/she discussed topics which fostered personal growth, emphasized student success, supported academic performance, and reinforced school attendance. The program goals consisted of four critical components: one being academic that students will pass all classes with a score of 70% or better, students will improve their attendance to no more than five unexcused absences in the semester, students will reduce discipline referrals to no more than three per semester, and lastly, students will have met with their mentors at least once a week for as long as they are participating in the program.

The Population and Study Participants

During the 2010-11 school year, there were thirty-five students enrolled in the Uplift Mentor Program. The demographic profile of students participating in the Uplift Mentor program (n=35) is reflected in Table 7: Demographic Characteristics of Uplift Mentor Program

Participants (SY 2010-2011) and the demographic profile of the matched pair for the control group (n=35) is reflected in Table 8: Demographic Characteristics of the Control Group Participants (SY 2010-11). In the mentor program group, more than 54% of the students participating in the study were female. Almost 70% of the students in the mentor program group were African-American, 20% of the students in the mentor program group were Hispanic and 11% of the students in the mentor program group were multi-racial. None of the students in the study were Caucasian as none of the participants in the Uplift Mentor Program were Caucasian. Sixty percent of the students in the mentor program group were in grades 9 and 10, 29% of the students in the mentor program group were in eleventh grade and 11% of the students were in twelfth grade (see Table 7). Specifically for the control group, more than 54% of the students not participating in the Uplift Mentor Program were female. Seventy-one percent of the students not participating in the program were African-American, 26% of the students in the control group were Hispanic and 3% were multi-racial. Fifty-seven percent of the students not participating in the program were in grades 9 and 10, 31% were in the eleventh grade and 11% were in the twelfth grade (see Table 8). The mentor program group and control group participants were similar in terms of gender, race/ethnicity and grade level; however, the researcher worked with whole group data and did not stratify the analysis by gender, race/ethnicity and grade. There were participant differences in time participating for students in the Uplift Mentor Program which created a threat to the validity of the study results. Similarly, not all participants in the Uplift Mentor Program attended the same number of weekly sessions with their respective mentor which created an additional limitation to the study.

The control group in this study consisted of 35 students who were matched demographically to the mentor program group and matched based on the 8th grade prediction

Table 7

Demographic Characteristics of Uplift Mentor Program Participants (N = 35)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	16	45.7
Female	19	54.3
Total	35	100.0
Race/Ethnicity		
African-American	24	68.6
Caucasian	0	0.0
Hispanic/Latino	7	20.0
Multiracial	4	11.4
Total	35	100.0
Grade		
9	9	25.7
10	12	34.3
11	10	28.6
12	4	11.4
Total	35	100.0

Table 8

Demographic Characteristics of Control Group (N = 35)

Characteristic	n	%
Gender		
Male	16	45.7
Female	19	54.3
Total	35	100.0
Race/Ethnicity		
African-American	25	71.4
Caucasian	0	0.0
Hispanic/Latino	9	25.7
Multiracial	1	2.9
Total	35	100.0
Grade		
9	8	22.9
10	12	34.3
11	11	31.4
12	4	11.4
Total	35	100.0

score for NC End of Course exams in high school. The teachers in this study were all teachers who taught students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program at Millbrook High School during any semester while the students were participating in the program. The mentors in this study were mentors from the Crossroads Fellowship Church who served as mentors for students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program during the timeframe of this study. The leaders participating in the study were the school principal, the school assistant principal who worked with the Uplift Mentor Program, and the missions pastor of the church.

Design of the Study

A mixed method research design was chosen for this study. Creswell (2008) defines mixed methods research designs as procedures for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study, and for analyzing and reporting this data based on a priority and sequence of information. The rationale for choosing this mixed method research design was that collecting qualitative data in a second phase was important to explain in more detail through qualitative research the initial quantitative statistical results and the qualitative data supported the reliability of the quantitative data. The qualitative data permitted an in-depth exploration of teacher and mentor perceptions of the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on participating student success. Qualitative data was analyzed using the explanatory method (Creswell, 2008). Specifically, the researcher used the explaining results procedure described by Creswell by analyzing the quantitative data to identify how the program and control group compared in academic achievement, attendance and discipline. Following the quantitative analysis, a qualitative focus group and interviews were conducted to explore the teachers', mentors', school administrators' and pastor's perceptions of reasons why these differences may have been found. The research design included: quantitative data for academic and behavioral outcomes were

analyzed. Qualitative data from interviews conducted with the school principal and the church pastor as well as qualitative data from focus group participants provided insight into the impact of the partnership on students as well as teachers' and mentors' perceptions of student success. The research design also included: (1) Matched pairs were determined selecting a test group and a control group; (2) The test group was comprised of participants in the faith-based partnership Uplift Mentor Program; and (3) The control group was comprised of a similar demographic group of students who have not participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. The control group of students had similar North Carolina End of Course (EOC) test scores, similar gender, and similar race. The control group was selected so that a matched pair analysis could be conducted. The study examined the differences between the control group and the test group for the variables of the study: improved End of Course performance, improved attendance, reduction in office discipline referrals, and reduction in suspensions from school.

To address the research questions, several analyses were completed: an account of the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program Partnership on EOC performance, an account of the impact of the partnership on student attendance, an account of the impact of the partnership on office discipline referrals, and an account of the impact of the partnership on suspension. The information allowed the researcher to discuss the overall patterns and trends. Finally, the IBM SPSS Statistics (v. 18) program was utilized for the statistical analysis.

Pre- and post- student outcome data were analyzed to examine the effect that the faith-based partnership had on student achievement, attendance, and suspensions. The results for the mentor program group and the control group were compared to detect differences. Because the primary purpose of this study was to detect these differences in achievement, attendance and suspensions, the primary focus of the quantitative data was on descriptive statistics and

comparisons were made using effect sizes. G*Power 3.1.3 was used to determine the effect size that would be needed to show a significant difference in means between the control group and the test group each with an n=32 at the .05 level of significance ($\alpha=.05$). Since there is an inverse relationship between sample size and power (the smaller the sample size, the larger the power) it was determined that power would need to be at least .8 or higher to show a significant difference. In other words, since the size of the mentor program group and the control group was small, power needed to be large.

Effect scores will be calculated using the pooled Cohen d formula:

$$d = M_1 - M_2 / \sigma_{\text{pooled}}$$

$$\sigma_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{[(\sigma_1^2 + \sigma_2^2) / 2]}$$

M_1 = mean for mentor program/control group 1

M_2 = mean for mentor program/control group 2

σ_1 = standard deviation of mentor program/control group 1

σ_2 = standard deviation of mentor program/control group 2

When differences were of sufficient magnitude the Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare two independent groups of paired samples. The Mann-Whitney U Test is a non-parametric test which does not rely on normal distribution and is used to compare two independent groups of sampled data. The Mann-Whitney U Test makes no assumptions about the distribution normality of the data (Pallant, 2007).

To address research hypothesis number one, participant composite performance on EOC exams was analyzed and participant academic performance in EOC classes as indicated by letter grade received was analyzed. To address research hypothesis number two, participant office

discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions were explored. To address research hypothesis number three, participant attendance rates were analyzed.

For the second set of hypotheses, to address research question number one, a focus group was convened with the teachers who taught participants in the Uplift Mentor Program. To address research question number two, a focus group was convened with mentors who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. To address research question number three, interviews were conducted with the school principal, the school assistant principal that worked with the Uplift Mentor Program and the church missions pastor.

Data Collection Procedures

Processes

In this study, pre and post student outcome data were analyzed to examine the effect that the faith-based partnership had on student achievement, attendance and suspensions. The results for the group who received faith-based mentoring and the control group were compared to detect differences. All data were gathered for this study by assessing and synthesizing information from district demographic data, study school demographic data, study school student group performance data and study school group student discipline data. These data were obtained from the WCPSS Evaluation and Research department which created the data set for this study using the following reports: (Mercury Student Suspension Report, NC Wise School Attendance Report Student Access Module – SAM, and School NC End of Course Performance Report). A summary of demographic information about the study participants was provided.

Controls

Teacher names were replaced with generic labels (e.g. Teacher A) and student identifiers were removed by the district's evaluation and research department prior to providing the

required data set for this study. Focus group responses were secured under lock and key during the research and only made accessible to the researcher. Upon completion of the research, the focus group responses were destroyed utilizing a cross-cut shredder. No teacher's name or demographic information were linked to a response. The student NC End of Course test scores were provided as group composite score information and no individual student NC End of Course test scores were provided by the district to the researcher. Upon completion of the research, this data was destroyed in compliance with the WCPSS district established standards and policies. The data was only accessed by the senior director for program accountability in the district evaluation and research department and the researcher.

Data sources include:

1. Demographic data previously collected by the evaluation and research department at Millbrook High School.
2. Student discipline data collected by the school administration at Millbrook High School.
3. Data provided by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction available to the public after the state tests are administered. Student achievement data is shared with the LEAs and the public to report how proficient each respective LEA's students are on the North Carolina Standard Course of Study

Directions

Comparisons were made between the achievement outcomes of the students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program and the achievement outcomes of the comparison group of students who served as a control.

For the comparison of the mentor program and control groups, percentages for each respective grade level, race and gender were used. A control group with demographic characteristics that matched the mentor program group was selected. The differences between the mentor program group and the control group were examined. Outcomes of the two groups were compared using the Mann-Whitney U Test. Of the two groups, measures of central tendencies were used to determine if the two groups differed significantly. However, individual differences between students were not examined in this study. The data was de-identified data and was a secondary set of data from the district's Evaluation and Research department. Individual students were not identified.

The study included a focus group consisting of teachers and program mentors to further examine their experiences with the faith-based mentor program, and interviews with school administrators and church leaders to assess their perception of student attitude toward school for the Uplift Mentoring students. The teachers and mentors selected for the focus group were not randomly selected, but were those who taught students that participated in the Uplift Mentor program and who mentored students in the program.

Student success in the Millbrook High School included a positive attitude toward school and academic achievement. In order to study the academic and behavioral changes in students, an analysis was conducted of the End of Course exam scores and course performance, attendance data, and discipline referral data. This study was conducted to determine if there is a significant academic difference in the End of Course exam growth scores for high school students who participated in the Uplift Mentoring Program compared to students who did not participate in the program. In addition, this study was also conducted to measure whether there was a significant

difference in behavioral outcomes for the Uplift Mentoring Program students compared to those who did not participate in the program.

Focus group participants were not randomly selected, but were selected by the principal of the Millbrook High School and were brought together at the Millbrook High School media center to engage in a guided discussion about the school partnership. These teachers were teachers who taught the participants in the Uplift Mentor Program. Focus group participants were selected because they had first-hand observation of and direct knowledge of program implementation. The focus group was facilitated by the researcher and the length of the focus group was 90 minutes. The focus group questions focused on five key areas: (1) program implementation and partnership; (2) leadership and engagement; (3) support for the program; (4) program equity; (5) student learning and social/emotional development. The focus groups were convened because all participants had first-hand observation of student behavior and knowledge of the program's impact on student attitude toward school. The focus group questions were centered on perceptions of the school administrators, teachers, mentors and church leadership of the Crossroads Fellowship Church. The focus group questions are provided in Appendix C.

Statistical Analysis

This section describes the methods that were used to investigate the study's research questions. There were two parts to this study: quantitative academic and behavioral outcomes and qualitative interviews and a focus group.

Quantitative Analysis

Pre- and post- student outcome data were analyzed to examine the effect that the faith-based partnership had on student achievement, attendance, and suspensions. The results for the mentor program group and the control group were compared to detect differences in academic

success, school attendance, and student discipline. The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare two independent groups of paired samples. The Mann-Whitney U Test is a non-parametric test which does not rely on normal distribution and is used to compare two independent groups of sampled data. The Mann-Whitney U Test makes no assumptions about the distribution normality of the data (Pallant, 2007). Since the mentor program group is small (n=35) an effect size calculation was done to determine the amount of difference that is needed to show that there was a difference between the two groups. For a small program group we will need to see a larger effect size to determine that there was a difference. Gpower software was used.

Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were collected through focus group discussions with teachers who taught students who participated in the Uplift Mentoring Program and mentors who participated in the Uplift Mentoring Program. Interviews were conducted with the school principal, the school assistant principal, and the church missions pastor who worked with students of the Uplift Mentor Program. The focus group protocol addressed perceived student attitude toward school. In particular, the focus group protocol sought to gather information about student willingness to attend school, comply with the school code of conduct, and complete academic assignments as well as program implementation fidelity in five areas (program implementation and partnership, leadership and engagement, program support, program equity, and student learning and social/emotional development). The addition of the qualitative data provides insight into the teachers', mentors', principal's and pastor's perception of the impact of the program on students' success and why there were differences between the mentor program group and the control group. This confirms the validity of the program's impact on student academic success,

attendance, and discipline. Focus group data was analyzed to make an explicit link between the participants' responses and perception patterns about student attitude toward school. The researcher relied upon Krueger's (1994) method for analyzing focus group data by asking the following questions: (a) What was known and then confirmed or challenged, (b) what was suspected and then confirmed or challenged, and (c) what was new that wasn't previously suspected?

Summary

This chapter presented the methodology for the study. An overview of the study and the research perspective were presented. An in-depth context for the study was described, and the participants were identified. Strategies for collecting data were discussed. Research questions were presented, and the methods for analyzing the data were offered. Therefore, the study sought to provide information to surmise if the faith-based partnership created a significant impact on student academic and behavioral success as defined by the three research questions and three hypotheses of the study.

Chapter 4 provides the results of the study and analysis of data. The conclusions and implications of the study are presented in Chapter 5 as well as the contribution the study makes to the body of research, additions to the literature, and areas for further research.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS OF THE STUDY

This chapter presents the results of the Uplift Mentor study. The problem addressed in this study was the perceived effect of faith based mentorship on student academic and behavioral success through a partnership between schools and faith-based organizations.

During the 2010-11 school year, there were thirty-five students enrolled in the Uplift Mentor Program. Matched pairs were developed for the control group. Students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program and the control group were matched based on the general demographic variables and their eighth grade NC EOC prediction scores for Math and English in high school. The mentor program group (n=35) (see Table 7) and control group (n=35) (see Table 8) participants were similar in terms of gender, race/ethnicity and grade level. However, there were student participant differences for the amount of time participating in the Uplift Mentor Program which created a threat to the validity of the study results. Similarly, administrators reported during the interviews that not all participants in the Uplift Mentor Program attended the same number of weekly sessions with their respective mentor. Administrators also reported that these data were not readily available for the researcher at the time of this study. These differences created an additional limitation to the study.

A mixed method research design was chosen. The first phase of the study consisted of the collection of quantitative data from a mentor program group, the Uplift Mentor students, and a similar control group who did not receive mentorship. The second phase of the study consisted of the collection of qualitative data through a focus group approach to provide an in-depth exploration of teacher and mentor perceptions of the impact of the Uplift Mentor program on participating student success. The rationale for choosing this mixed method research design was that collection of qualitative data through the focus group was important to support the reliability

of the quantitative data by further exploring in more detail information which focused on student gains, absences and suspensions. Following the quantitative analysis, a qualitative focus group and interviews were conducted to explore the teachers', mentors', school administrators' and pastor's perceptions of reasons why these differences may have been found. Teachers and mentors participated in the focus group together due to logistical challenges. The school was not able to coordinate separate focus group sessions for teachers and mentors thus creating an additional limitation to the study. Future studies or replication of this study should conduct separate focus group sessions.

Statement of the Problem

Since the establishment of the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Partnerships, partnerships among school systems and faith-based organizations have increased. A limited amount of research has been conducted to determine whether or not these partnerships have had a positive impact on student academic success. Existing literature provided examples of partnerships and suggestions for establishing partnerships (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008; Cnaan & Boddie, 2002; Dixit, 2002; Epstein et al., 2002; Friend, 2000; Sanders & Harvey, 2002; Sinha, 2006; Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). The problem addressed in this study was the perceived effect of faith based mentorship on student academic and behavioral success. School system district level leadership, school level leadership and faith-based organization leadership could benefit from evidence that these partnerships have positively impacted student academic and behavioral outcomes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the perceived effect of faith-based mentorship on student academic and behavioral success by examining the impact of a specific partnership--

the Uplift Mentor Program -- a faith-based partnership with a high school in the Wake County Public School System in North Carolina. The Uplift Mentor Partnership was developed by faculty at Millbrook High School and members of Crossroads Fellowship Church with a goal of improving student academic and behavioral success. The study sought to determine whether students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program experienced more academic and behavioral gains than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the Uplift Mentor Program.

Overview of Methodology

The research design included: (1) quantitative data for academic and behavioral outcomes and, (2) qualitative data from interviews conducted with the school principal and the church pastor and (3) qualitative data from focus group participants which provided insight into the impact of the partnership on students as well as teachers' and mentors' perceptions of student success.

Quantitative Analysis

Thirty-five respondents participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. A control group of similar students who did not participate in the program but had similar characteristics as the mentor program group was assembled so that a matched-pairs analysis could be conducted. The control group of students had similar North Carolina End of Course (EOC) test scores, similar gender, and similar racial/ethnic characteristics. The study examined the differences between the mentor program group and the control group for the variables of the study: improved End of Course exam growth, improved attendance, reduction in office discipline referrals, and reduction in suspensions from school.

To address the research questions, several analyses were completed: an account of the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on EOC exam growth, an account of the impact of the mentor program on core course passing rates, student attendance, and student suspensions. The information allowed for the discussion of overall patterns and trends. IBM SPSS Statistics (v. 18) was utilized to conduct a descriptive analysis of the data as well as to perform the Mann-Whitney U Tests of the differences between the two groups.

Pre- and post- student outcome data were analyzed to examine the perceived effect that the mentor program within the faith-based partnership had on student achievement, attendance, and suspensions. The results of the Mann-Whitney U tests for the mentor program group and the control group were compared to detect differences in achievement, attendance and suspensions. These differences were considered significant at the .05 level (Pallant, 2007).

Statistical Power

The generalizability of the findings was substantiated by looking at medium and large effect sizes since the size of the mentor program and control groups was small. G*Power 3.1.3 was used to determine the effect size that would be needed to illustrate the generalizability of the results. Effect scores were calculated for both mentor program and control groups using the pooled Cohen d formula:

$$d = M_1 - M_2 / \sigma_{\text{pooled}}$$

$$\sigma_{\text{pooled}} = \sqrt{[(\sigma_1^2 + \sigma_2^2) / 2]}$$

M_1 = mean for mentor program/control group 1

M_2 = mean for mentor program/control group 2

σ_1 = standard deviation of mentor program/control group 1

σ_2 = standard deviation of mentor program/control group 2

Mann-Whitney U Test

The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to compare two independent groups of paired samples to test for significant differences between the two groups. The Mann-Whitney U Test makes no assumptions about the distribution normality of the data and is used to compare two independent groups of sampled data (Pallant, 2007). The Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the null hypotheses discussed previously in this study. The Mann-Whitney U Test is an appropriate non-parametric test to determine if student learning, attendance, and behavioral (except for suspension) outcomes for Uplift Mentor Program students significantly differ from similar students attending Millbrook High School. When differences were of sufficient magnitude—medium and large effect scores—reference was made to their generalizability.

Effect Size

Effect size was calculated for each of the variables (see Table 10). Cohen (1988) defined effect sizes as “small, $d = .2$, medium, $d = .5$, and large, $d = .8$ ” (p. 25). A large effect size, any value equal to or greater than $.8$, indicates that these results may be generalizable to a similar larger population. The mentor program group (Uplift Mentor Program participants) was used as the mean 1 group and the control group as the mean 2 group for this calculation. The pooled standard deviation is the standard deviation for the entire population (control group + test group).

To address research hypothesis number one, participant academic gain scores on EOC exams were compared for the mentor program and control group to determine whether there was a significant difference for students participating in both groups during the study year. To address hypothesis number two, participant academic performance in core classes as indicated by letter grade received was analyzed to determine if participants’ rate of passing core classes

increased. To address research hypothesis number three, participant office discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions were explored. A Mann-Whitney U test could not be conducted due to missing data. Not every student in the Uplift Mentor Program or in the control group was suspended, so there was a lot of missing values in the suspension data. Therefore, the results of this data were descriptive. To address research hypothesis number four, participant attendance rates were analyzed.

Qualitative Analysis

For the second set of hypotheses, to address research question number one, a focus group was conducted to gather more information from the teachers who taught participants in the Uplift Mentor Program. To address research question number two, a focus group was convened with mentors who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program to generate insight about the perceived impact of the partnership on student academic and behavioral outcomes. In addition, focus group questions (see Appendix C) helped to determine how students were referred to the Uplift Mentor program and helped to identify how teachers and mentors felt about students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. In addition, the focus group helped to assess the perception of the program's impact on student attitude towards discipline, multi-level leadership, engagement, and support, program equity, student learning and student social engagement in the school. In the context of the focus group discussion, social engagement was defined as an increased involvement in school clubs and extra-curricular activities. To address research question number three, unstructured interviews were conducted with the school principal, school assistant principal that worked with the Uplift Mentor Program and church missions pastor. Open-ended questions (see Appendix D) allowed those responsible for implementing the program to elaborate on the extent to which school administrators and church leaders perceived

student attitude improved as a result of participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. The focus group and interview results were used to examine participants' perceptions of student academic performance and behavior in the context of the student performance data that was examined for students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program.

The researcher, with the support of the school principal and the Uplift Mentor program coordinator, conducted focus group interviews with teachers and church mentors about their perception of the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on student learning and behavior. In the focus group, the researcher invited all teachers who taught students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program and all mentors who served the students. To maintain anonymity, letters were sent from the researcher to the Uplift Mentor program coordinator who invited the teachers and mentors. Twenty-one teachers and mentors participated in the focus group sessions, which were held during each academic period. These focus group interviews lasted 90 minutes and notes were taken by a neutral recorder during each session. Because the focus groups consisted of 4 to 6 participants, the neutral recorder did not have difficulty typing individual responses to each question posed by the researcher. Each participant was asked not to identify their role in the Uplift Mentor Program. As such, there was no distinction made between teacher and mentor responses.

In conducting the unstructured interviews with the school principal and church pastor, the researcher conducted one-on-one interviews. The researcher called the school principal and church pastor to schedule a time that would be convenient for interview. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes. The researcher asked questions (see Appendix D) and recorded answers from one participant at a time. Analysis of the focus group and interviews resulted in

the identification of common themes that helped to understand the perceived impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on student academic and behavioral success.

Research Hypotheses and Research Questions

The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved growth targets on the NC End of Course exams more than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
2. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a higher passing rate of core classes than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
3. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a lower number of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the program.
4. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had fewer absences in school than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.

Three research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent did teachers of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?
2. To what extent did mentors of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

3. To what extent did school administrators and church leaders who worked with the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

Analysis of Results

Introduction

During the school year (2010-11), 35 students from Millbrook High School participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. To assess the impact of the program on student learning and behavior, a control group was selected from the Millbrook High School population. The control group represented 35 students who had similar characteristics to those students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. In examining the relationship sample size and effect size for this study, the research analyzed school performance and behavior data for 70 students attending Millbrook High School (35 in the mentor program group and 35 in the control group). More than 54% of the students participating in the study were female. Seventy percent of the students in the study were African-American, 23% of the students in the study were Hispanic and 7% of the students in the study were multi-racial. None of the students in the study were Caucasian as none of the participants in the Uplift Mentor Program were Caucasian. More than 58% of the students were in grades 9 and 10, 30% of the students were in eleventh grade and 11% of the students were in twelfth grade (see Table 7 and Table 8). Specifically for the mentor program group, more than 54% of the students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program were female. Sixty-eight percent of the students in the program were African-American, 20% were Hispanic and 11% were multi-racial. Twenty-five percent of the students participating in the program were in ninth grade, 34.3% were in the tenth grade, 28.6% were in the eleventh grade and 11.4% were in the twelfth grade (see Table 7).

The frequency distribution of academic growth on NC End of Course exams, rate of courses passed, suspension rates and attendance rates were examined for the mentor program group and control group (see Appendix E). All of the frequency tables included group participant growth on the NC End of Course exams, participant course completion numbers, days absent and suspension rates prior to participating in the Uplift Mentor Program and after participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. An analysis was conducted of the study mean sub-group days absent (see Table 9). The data showed that on average female students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent from school more days when compared to female students in the control group. In addition, the data showed that female students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program passed fewer core courses when compared to female students in the control group. Likewise, the data showed that female students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved less growth on the NC EOC when compared to female students in the control group. Data on race/ethnicity revealed a similar pattern for African-American and Hispanic students. African-American and Hispanic students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent from school more days when compared to African-American and Hispanic students in the control group. African-American and Hispanic students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program passed fewer core courses than African American and Hispanic students in the control group. African-American and Hispanic students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved less growth on the NC EOC exams when compared to African-American and Hispanic students in the control group. However, among multi-racial students, participation in the Uplift Mentor Program had a positive impact on student outcomes. For example, multi-racial students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent fewer days than multi-racial students in the control group. Multi-racial students that participated in the

Table 9

Study Participant Selected Sub-group Data Analysis

Characteristic	Days Absent 2010-11 Mean	Courses Passed 2010- 11 Mean	EOC Growth 2010-11 Mean
Female Uplift (N=19)	12.09	6.78	-.3087
Female Control (N=19)	6.79	6.84	-.1316
African American Uplift (N=24)	12.12	6.5	-.0484
African American Control (N=25)	7.04	8.12	.0258
Multi-racial Uplift (N=4)	3.25	8	-.0562
Multi-racial Control (N=1)	7	8	-.0920
Hispanic Uplift (N=7)	12	5.85	-.3742
Hispanic Control (N=9)	2.44	7.22	.0778

Uplift Mentor Program were absent on the average the same number of days as were multi-racial students in the control group. Multi-racial students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved more growth on the NC EOC exams when compared to multi-racial students in the control group. However, the number of multi-racial students in the study was limited (n=5), thus the results may not be readily generalizable to a larger population.

Student Growth

The distribution of growth scores for 2010-11 was used to determine if student growth on the end-of-course exams is different for students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program compared to those not who did not participate in the program. The mean rank end-of-course growth score for Uplift Mentor Program students was 32.49 compared to 38.51 for a control group of students with similar characteristics, for a difference of 6.02. There was no significant difference between the two groups at the .05 level and the null hypothesis cannot be rejected ($p=.215$). The effect size of .24 for academic gain (growth) was small, thus the results may not readily generalizable to a larger population. Even though the Uplift Mentor program group showed negative growth in school year 2010-11, the growth gap was smaller between the two groups in school year 2010-11 than the growth gap found in school year 2009-10.

Passing Core Classes

The distribution of core courses passed for 2010-11 was used to determine if student rate of passing core classes is different for students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program compared to those who did not participate in the program. During SY 2009-10, the average rate of passing core classes for the Uplift Mentor Program students was 28.74 compared to 42.26 for a control group of students with similar characteristics, for a difference of 13.52. For SY 2009-

Table 10

Results for Mann-Whitney U Test and Pooled Cohen D Effect Size

Null Hypothesis	Mann-Whitney (z)	P value (2-tailed)	Decision	Effect Size	Effect Size Criterion
The distribution of growth 2010-11 is the same across categories of Program Type	-1.239	.215	Retain the null hypothesis.	.24	Small
The distribution of Ratio 2009-10 is the same across categories of Program Type	-2.947	.003	Reject the null hypothesis.	.8	Large
The distribution of Ratio 2010-11 is the same across categories of Program Type.	-1.936	.053	Retain the null hypothesis.	.52	Medium
The distribution of days absent 2009-10 is the same across categories of Program Type.	2.538	.011	Reject the null hypothesis.	.51	Medium
The distribution of days absent 2010-11 is the same across categories of Program Type.	3.504	.000	Reject the null hypothesis.	.57	Medium
The distribution of DifferenceDaysAbsent is the same across categories of Program Type.	1.184	.236	Retain the null hypothesis	.27	Small

10 there was no significant difference between the two groups at the .05 level. During SY 2010-11, the average rate of passing core classes for the Uplift Mentor Program students was 31.03 compared to 39.97 for a control group of students with similar characteristics, for a difference of 8.94. For SY 2010-11 there was no significant difference between the two groups at the .05 level. Based on the SPSS output from a Mann-Whitney U test, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected at the .05 level of significance ($p=.053$) for SY 2010-11. The null hypothesis was rejected for 2009-2010 at the .05 level of significance ($p=.003$). However, the effect size was .8 for SY 2009-10 and was .52 for SY 2010-11 for the study year for the ratio courses passed. The large effect size for Ratio Courses Passed 2009-2010 indicated that the result was rather generalizable to other populations of this type.

While the mentor program group showed an increase in the percent of the core courses passed from the year prior to the study year, when compared with the control group, there was not enough evidence to suggest that the difference in this measure of student performance could be attributed to participation in the Uplift Mentor Program. This lack of statistical significance related to improvement in school performance for Uplift Mentor program participants may likely be due to a very small sample size ($n=35$) (see Table 7).

Students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program passed fewer courses when compared to the control group (see Table 11). In 2009-10, Uplift Mentor students passed 77% of their courses compared to 92% for students in the control groups. In 2010-11, Uplift Mentor students passed 76% of their courses compared to 88% in the control group.

Table 11

Number of Courses Taken and Passed in SY 2009-10 and SY 2010-11

School Year	Total Courses Taken	Total Courses Passed	Percent Courses Passed
2009-10			
Uplift Mentor Program	285	219	76.8%
Control Group	286	263	92.0%
2010-11			
Uplift Mentor Program	300	229	76.3%
Control Group	282	249	88.3%

Days Absent

The distribution of student days absent from school for 2010-11 was used to determine if days absent is different for students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program compared to those who did not participate in the program. The question of interest to the researcher was whether, on average, program participation affects student absenteeism.

During SY 2009-10, the average days absent for the Uplift Mentor Program students was 41.66 compared to 29.34 for a control group of students with similar characteristics, for a difference of 12.32. However, during SY 2010-11, the average days absent for the Uplift Mentor Program students was 44.00 compared to 27.00 for a control group of students with similar characteristics, for a difference of 17.00. There was a significant difference between the two groups at the .05 level (see Table 10). Based on the SPSS output from a Mann-Whitney U test, the researcher rejected the null hypothesis at the .05 level of significance ($p=.011$) for SY 2009-10 and rejected the null hypothesis for 2010-11 at the .05 level of significance ($p=.000$) for SY 2010-11. The effect sizes for days absent (.57) in SY 2010-11 was medium and thus generalizable with some caution to a larger population and the difference in days absent (.27) was not immediately generalizable as there was a small effect size; therefore not immediately generalizable to those in a larger population. While the effect sizes for days absent and courses passed in 2010-11 were medium; and thus generalizable, they should be used with some caution. There was not a significant difference between the mentor program group and the control group when comparing the year prior to the program and the case study year.

Short Term and Long Term Suspensions

In 2009-10, nine students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program received short term suspensions compared to three students in the control group. In 2010-11, 14 students

participating in the Uplift Mentor Program received short term suspensions compared to 6 students in the control group. None of the students in the study received long term suspensions in either year. The number of students in the sample that received short term suspensions (n=20) was too small and thus provided a limited amount of data for the researcher to be able to conduct Mann-Whitney U Tests on suspension data. Therefore, descriptive results have been provided. Female students (n=19) participating in the Uplift Mentor Program had a mean number of days short term suspended of 2.26 in SY 2010-11 while female students (n=19) in the control group had a mean number of days short term suspended of .79 in SY 2010-11. African-American students (n=24) participating in the Uplift Mentor Program had a mean number of days short term suspended of 2.21 in SY 2010-11 while African-American students (n=25) in the control group had a mean number of days short term suspended of .80 in SY 2010-11. Hispanic students (n=7) participating in the program had a mean number of days short term suspended of 2.29 in SY 2010-11 while Hispanic students (n=9) in the control group had a mean number of days short term suspended of .33 in SY 2010-11. Multi-racial students (n=4) participating in the Uplift Mentor Program had a mean number of days short term suspended of .25 while multi-racial students (n=1) in the control group had a mean number of days short term suspended of .00. The total number of multi-racial students in the study was very small (n=5). While a limited number of students in the study received short term suspensions (n=22), the data showed that more students (n=14) participating in the Uplift Mentor Program were suspended than the control group (n=7).

Qualitative Analysis

Focus Group

Focus group patterns in responses were examined to allow for an analysis of the patterns from the focus group responses for each of the categories of questions during the focus group. The patterns for the overall perceptions of the teachers and mentors who served the participants in the Uplift Mentor Program were examined and narrowed for established common themes.

Five major categories of questions were used to gain focus group participants' perception about the program's implementation, engagement, support, equity, student learning, and student social engagement in school (see Appendix C). The responses were analyzed for the overall combined teacher and mentor perception of improved student performance, improved behavior and improved attendance as a result of participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. The overall patterns in the focus group responses showed that there were some common themes in the perceptions of teachers about the Uplift Mentor Program. Twenty-one (n=21) teacher and mentor participants participated in the Uplift Mentor Program focus group discussion. Teachers were invited who taught one or more students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program in school year 2009-10 or school year 2010-11. Mentors were invited who served the students in the Uplift Mentor Program in the school year 2009-10 or school year 2010-11. Twelve of the focus group participants were teachers and nine of the focus group participants were mentors for students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program.

The mentors and teachers participated in the same focus group due to logistical and coordination challenges. In an effort to maintain anonymity, participants did not reveal their role to the researcher. This decision however, created a limitation to the study. Future studies of this partnership should conduct separate focus groups with the teachers and the mentors. All of the

participants responses were captured by a neutral recorder during the focus group discussion as each of the questions were asked. The researcher analyzed the responses for patterns in the responses or responses with similar ideas. Responses were initially examined to determine if respondents perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to positive student success and outcomes. Specifically, the researcher looked for patterns in the responses that indicated that the teachers and mentors perceived that student academic performance and behavior improved as a result of participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. The responses were then examined the comments for statements that supported this perception. Not all 21 participants in the focus group discussion responded to every question. Therefore, the researcher identified common themes from the comments provided by the respondents to each question. The researcher initially looked for patterns in the responses around two ideas: (1) perception that the Uplift Mentor Program positively impacted student academic and behavioral success, and (2) perception that the Uplift Mentor Program did not positively impact student academic and behavioral success. The overall consensus and perception of the focus group participants (n=21) was that the Uplift Mentor Program positively impacted students who participated in the program. For example, one participant noted that “students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program felt more positive about getting good grades, coming to school and improving their behavior in school.” Another participant noted that she perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program provided students with more confidence to believe in themselves by letting them know that others believed in the student. The participant noted that “when a student has confidence in an adult with whom the student has established a relationship, the adult’s beliefs often transfer to the student.” Thus, if the adult believed that grades, school attendance and good behavior were important, then the student believed this as well. The literature supported this perception. As

was noted in the research, family and community involvement in schools was linked strongly to improvements in academic achievement of students, better school attendance, and improved school programs and quality (Michael et al., 2007). It was further noted in the literature that “when schools, families, and community groups worked together to support learning, children tended to do better in school, stayed in school longer, and liked school more” (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7). While there was a common theme around perception by the focus group respondents that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to student success, the quantitative data did not support this perception. There was a difference in the quantitative data and the focus group perceived differences. Potential causes for this difference as well as other factors that were not examined which may have played a role in this difference between the focus group perception and the data results will be addressed in Chapter 5 as a need for further study and exploration.

Common Themes:

I. Teacher and Mentor Perception about Uplift Mentor Program Impact on student attitude toward School

a. In what ways do you perceive that The Uplift Mentor Program helped participating students improve academically in their core classes?

Eighty-six percent of the focus group participants (n=18) responded to this question. Thirty-three percent (n=6) of the eighteen respondents had a similar response. The common theme in the responses to this question was around students performing better in their core classes because they believed that someone cared for them. A second common theme was mentors and teachers perceived that students demonstrated more effort and a more positive attitude towards being successful in their classes when they felt that more adults were holding

them accountable for achieving. The literature supported this perception as was noted when Sanders and Herting (2000) found that students' perception of teacher and parental academic support and church involvement indirectly influenced achievement through their positive and significant influences on students' academic self-concepts and school behaviors. Fifty-six percent (n=10) of the respondents commented on students having an improved attitude because they felt that a significant adult was holding them accountable. One focus group participant's comment was that students who participate in the Uplift Mentor Program "get more focus in meeting with an adult who cares about their academics. The adult asked questions such as what did you make on your test? This shows that someone cares about their success." Another focus group participant commented that "I have noticed that kids like an audience with someone who can be proud of their achievement, and the students say things like I'm going to show this to my mentor." Another example of the teacher and mentor comments was "The program helped students improve academically in that they are given emotional and academic support on a consistent basis. The belief that someone cares and supports them gives them the encouragement to continue striving to do better academically, set goals and work to achieve those goals."

b. If the Uplift Mentor Program helped participating students improve their NC

End of Course test scores, to what do you attribute this?

Sixty-six percent (n=14) of the respondents commented on this question. Forty-three percent (n=6) of the fourteen shared the common theme that having someone who cared, contributed to helping participating students improve on their NC EOC tests. One mentor commented, "It has to do with knowing that someone cares how they do in school, advising them to go get help, and encouraging them." Another commented that the Uplift Mentor program "provided a caring environment that let students belong and helped them know that adults are not

the enemy and are interested in investing time in them and helping them see what is important for the future.”

- c. Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, participation in the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to students achieving improved EOC test composite scores?

Sixty-six percent (n=14) of the respondents commented on this question. Forty-three percent (n=6) of the fourteen shared comments with the common theme that students improved on their EOC test composite scores because the students felt that someone cared about their progress and held them accountable. One participant commented that the program contributed to student success by “giving them confidence by believing that someone believes in them, as well as by helping them academically and emotionally. The impact has been moderate. If someone cares/supports/encourages them on a consistent basis, believes the tests are important, then the student begins to see the importance of the tests and the importance of doing well on the tests for their own satisfaction, as well as to live up to the expectations of the mentor.” Another focus group participant commented that the program has contributed to student success in that “it takes a year to change their attitude in some cases. I use sports analogies to relate to the students. It is great to see them excited about their grades and I am able to discuss their grades with them now that they are in the program.”

- d. Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a ‘minimal, moderate or significant’ impact on students’ attitude towards academic achievement in their core classes? Why?

Fifty-seven percent (n=12) of the participants responded to this question. Forty-two percent (n=5) of the twelve responses were around the common theme that someone cared for

the students and held them accountable. One focus group participant stated that the Uplift Mentor Program has had a significant impact and noted that “I think a mentor brings – connection to real life for their school work. I connect what they aspire to be and do to their academics. What if you wanted to do that – there is a real world out there and if you want to participate in it – you can do that. Some want to do sports, some want to do engineer – we work through plan A and plan B. Think of all of the jobs in the sports world – what do you need to do to get there. What other jobs exist – it changed our meetings by making the connections to school work.” Another participant commented that the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program was significant and noted that the “mentors help students prioritize their courses and help with their scheduling as well as managing their assignments.”

- e. Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a ‘minimal, moderate or significant’ impact on students’ attitude towards attending school? Why?

Ninety-five percent (n=20) of the focus group participants responded to this question. Seventy-five percent (n=15) of the responses were around the common theme of adults caring and holding the students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program accountable to attending school. This perceived positive impact of partnerships on improved attendance was noted in the literature. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) studied the relationship between absenteeism and community partnerships. They found that family-school-community partnership practices predicted an increase in daily attendance, a decrease in chronic absenteeism, or both. This notion of a perceived positive impact on student attendance was noted further in the literature by other researchers (Bafle, 2010; Roby, 2004; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004). One focus group participant noted “I think when the student is connected with the mentor, attendance gets better first then

the achievement gets better to making real world connections, they move from not caring at all about their attendance to caring about the content – there are different levels of mentor kids.”

Another respondent noted that “In the beginning, it is the extra things they get to do through Uplift, so they know you have to attend class in order to go on the program trips – Uplift Mentor Program is the carrot in many cases, but towards the end of the year, they do it on their own because they care about school more.” One of the respondents in the focus group noted that “the Uplift Mentor Program has had a significant impact on students’ attendance. Having someone to encourage the student and help them realize school is their job right now and to excel at school is to their benefit is a definite plus to the students’ attitude towards attendance and excelling. Students love to do well for the people they care about. They actually said I got this good attendance report for you.”

f. Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a ‘minimal, moderate or significant’ impact on students’ attitude towards displaying appropriate behavior at school?

All of the focus group participants (n=21) responded to this question. Eighty-six percent (n=18) of the participants comments were around the common theme of adults caring and holding students accountable. One focus group participant noted that “the Uplift Mentor Program has had a significant impact in my opinion on students’ behavior. I know I have one student who got long-term suspended prior to the program and this year, she has not had any infractions. She is here and doing well. In fact, she is hoping to graduate early.” Another participant in the focus group responded that “the Uplift Mentor Program has only had a moderate impact in my view. I feel that the impact was moderate because daily peer pressure plays a bigger role than the impact of the mentor, however, over time the students’ attitude can be modified and the effect of peer

pressure lessened when the mentor requires accountability from the student and the student seeks to please the mentor and live up to the expectation.” Another focus group participant noted that “I do see that the students support each other. The other kids in the program support each other. The mentor-mentee relationship is great, but the peer support curbs behavior. I have seen that a lot with my students.” This perception by teachers and mentors that the faith-based partnerships have a positive impact on student discipline was noted in the literature as well. Michael et al. (2007) found that family and community involvement was associated with improved student behavior and school discipline. Other scholars have pointed out the link between community collaboration with schools and improvement in student behavior (Ceperley, 2005; Sheldon & Epstein 2004).

II. Perceptions about Uplift Mentor Program multi-level leadership and engagement

a. In what ways do you perceive that Parents/Guardians of The Uplift Mentor

Program students are more actively engaged with the mentors of the program and/or school staff?

All of the focus group participants (n=21) responded to this question. While not many of the respondents perceived that parents/guardians were more engaged with the mentors or school staff, 33% (n=7) of the responses were around the common theme of caring, support and accountability. This perception that parents did not become more engaged in the school did not align with the literature. According to Ceperley (2005), family involvement positively impacted academic success and attendance. Westmoreland et al. (2009) stated that research suggested that family engagement promoted a range of benefits for students, including improved school readiness, higher student achievement, better social skills and behavior, and increased likelihood of high school graduation but did not note that this engagement led to increased parental

involvement in the school. One focus group respondent noted that “For some of the kids whose parents have had a negative experience with the school, being in uplift has allowed the parent to have a positive experience.” Another participant commented that “the Uplift Mentor Program has had a significant impact in my view on parents being more involved. I have emphasized more in the last few years – parent involvement and being an advocate for the parent as well as the student and connecting the parents’ encouragement with my encouragement so that the student sees we are all saying the same thing and that we all care. I am more intentional – when the students know parents and mentors are talking.” Another focus group respondent noted that “I think parents have become more connected who were once mad at the school. That third space – the church creates a great space for the parent to connect. I wish we could get the mentors and the parents face to face – we have not been able to figure that out yet - how to bridge the safe place (the church) to the school. Sports are easy because they have events for the students; however, non athletes don’t have enough events for parents to connect and meet the teachers. We do a lot of things in school that parents don’t connect with and the Uplift Mentor Program has provided that connection.”

b. In what ways are you as a teacher/mentor of The Uplift Mentor Program students actively engaged with the mentors/teachers of the program?

Sixty-two percent (n=13) of the focus group respondents responded to this question. Five of the responses were around the common theme of accountability and adults caring. One focus group respondent noted that “I have found as a mentor that I can contact the teachers and the teachers are always positive and want to help the students. I have never met a teacher in this school who has not wanted to give more than 100% to help the students. So I tell my mentee that the teacher is invested in you.” Another respondent commented that “I started mentoring my

first year teaching. I'm lucky – my mentee was new to the school, so we learned the school together. I am part of the school family. It makes my job better. I'm being held accountable while I'm holding my mentee accountable – mentoring keeps me here. I don't live near the school and thought about moving to a school closer to my home but having the mentee, makes me stay here. I keep coming for her.” In the literature, teacher engagement with students was noted to have a positive impact on student outcomes. Ding and Sherman (2006) found that student interaction with the teacher impacted the learning outcome.

- c. Do you perceive that administrators of Millbrook High School are actively engaged with mentors of the program? If so in what ways do you see them engaged? If not, what ways do you feel they could have been engaged?

Twenty-three percent (n=5) of the focus group participants responded to the question. There was a common pattern in the responses that one of the school administrators is the main person involved with the Uplift Mentor Program. One focus group participant noted that “I think they are all somewhat involved and some more than others. The one main administrator – the assistant principal does lot of trips and recruits students to the program. The program has grown from this effort by him.”

- d. Do you perceive that administrators of Millbrook High School are actively engaged with students of the program? If so what ways do you see them engaged? If not what ways do you feel they could have been engaged with the students?

Seventy-six percent (n=16) of the focus group participants responded to this question. The common thread in the responses was that the school administrators hold the students that participate in the Uplift Mentor Program accountable and that the administrators know all of the

students' names. The participants articulated that the school administrators really care about all of the students in the school. Seven of the sixteen responses to this question had this common theme. One focus group participant noted that "I see them being encouragers with the students." Another respondent noted that "I'm amazed that the principal knows all of the students. I am impressed that the administrators have a pulse on everything. I love the culture here. The administrators know all of the program students' names." This perception by teachers and mentors that school administrators were actively engaged and that this contributed to program success was noted in the literature as a critical factor for successful partnerships. As noted in the literature, a school's commitment to learning and a partnership focus on learning was key (Sanders & Harvey, 2002). Sanders and Harvey (2002) further found in their case study school that "according to its community partners, the school's visible commitment to students' learning was one of the key factors that attracted them to the school and kept them involved" (p. 1,359).

III. Perceptions about Uplift Mentor Program multi-level support

- a. Do you feel that the Principal of Millbrook High School provides adequate (financial and human) support for The Uplift Mentor Program?

Sixty-seven percent (n=14) of the focus group participants responded to this question. Forty-three percent (n=6) of the responses had a common theme that the principal provides a lot of human resources to the Uplift Mentor Program. One teacher noted that "the key is the human piece – when you have staff members and a principal who believes in the program a lot of things get done even if you don't have the fiscal resources." Another focus group participant who was a mentor noted that "we would not even be able to do the program without access to the facilities and the principal's approval of the things done in the program." Focus group participants noted that the principal gives a lot of support to the program in the form of human resources to include

dedicating a full time employee to coordinate the program. When the assistant principal was coordinating the program, he was torn between administrative duties and coordinating the Uplift Mentor Program. Since the principal dedicated another staff member to coordinate the program, the focus group participants felt that this demonstrated her commitment to the program.

IV. Perceptions about Uplift Mentor Program Equity

- a. Do you perceive that all the students at Millbrook High School have an equitable opportunity to participate in The Uplift Mentor program?

Eighty-one percent (n=17) of the focus group participants responded to this question. Sixty-five percent (n=11) of the respondents expressed that they perceived that all students at the school have an equitable opportunity to participate in the Uplift Mentor Program; however, 45% (n=5) of these eleven respondents noted that there are not enough mentors. One specifically noted that “we will never turn away a student who needs help. We find a way. Getting mentors is difficult, so the need is greater than the resources.” Another participant noted that “I do group mentoring so that I can serve more students rather than just 1:1. It is a lot but the coordinator works to make sure I could do that. I have some kids who are at risk socially but not academically. I’m not afraid to serve a group, it is not as intimate as 1:1 but it is working.”

- b. How do you perceive that students are recruited for the program?

Two of the focus group participants noted that students are primarily referred by the student services staff (counselors and social workers). Two focus group respondents noted that some students are referred by the teachers. It was noted by one focus group participant that “students can self nominate and teachers have input to refer students.”

- c. Do you perceive that the student participants of the Uplift Mentor program reflect the demographic (race/ethnicity) profile of the Millbrook High School student population?

It was a common view that the student participants in the Uplift Mentor program did not reflect the overall demographic profile of the Millbrook High School. However, one focus group participant noted that “of the at-risk students yes, this group reflects the other programs for at-risk students in the school.” The respondent indicated that other programs in the school that were designed for students at risk of school failure have a similar demographic profile. Another participant felt that “some white kids could be recommended to the program but they don’t struggle with the same issues.” Another focus group participant concurred with this comment and added that “white kids have made other connections on their own” indicating that the Hispanic and African-American students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program needed support to make connections in the school. While the perception of teachers and mentors was that the program did not reflect the overall demographic profile of the school, it was noted in the literature that this is critical. Cooper, Chavira and Mena (2005) noted that we must open the academic pipeline across ethnicity, income, and geography.

V. Perception about Uplift Mentor Program Participating Students ‘Learning, and Social Engagement in School

- a. Do you believe that students who participated in The Uplift Mentor Program became more socially engaged in the school?

Sixty-seven percent (n=14) of the focus group participants responded to this question. Twenty-one percent (n=3) of these fourteen focus group respondents responded with a common theme that the students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program bonded like club members

and even joined other clubs together. The literature supported this notion of students becoming more socially engaged in school. Henderson and Mapp (2002) noted that students tended to like school more when community groups engaged in partnerships with the school toward student success. One participant noted that “clubs has been a plus for Uplift Mentor participants. Uplift has been sort of like a club for the students. I think that it became a club within itself. They weren’t involved in anything and now they have a connection and a place to fit in the school.” Another participant noted that “I think that it became a club within itself. They weren’t involved in anything and now they have a connection and a fit.” It was noted by another focus group participant that the Uplift Mentor Program gave students “bragging rights” and that you would hear student going through the school saying “I’m in Uplift.” Other students wanted to be in the Uplift Mentor Program because of the many activities and field trips that the program participants were involved in.

b. What other factors do you believe were responsible for Uplift Mentor Program participants’ success?

Forty-eight percent (n=10) of the focus group participants responded to this question. Forty percent (n=4) of these participants’ common theme in their responses to this question was the personal relationships established between the students and the mentors contributed to student success. This important factor of relationship was noted in the literature. Sanders and Herting (2000) found that students’ perception of teacher and parental academic support and church involvement indirectly influenced achievement through their positive and significant influences on students’ academic self-concepts and school behaviors. Henderson and Mapp (2002) noted that when schools, families and communities work together, students tend to do better in school because they perceive that everyone involved in their education is supporting

their success. One focus group participant noted that “the relationship piece is the key.” She further noted that “I think it is really true that they cannot learn until they have a connection to believing someone cares. Radically removing the borders helped develop a key to their success. It was not like they can say I just did this because they have to which was the way they would look at teachers originally, but after being in the program, they did better because someone cared about their success.”

c. Do you think the Uplift Mentor Program was a major factor in student improvement?

Eighty-one percent (n=17) of the focus group participants responded to this question as a summary of their perceptions about the Uplift Mentor Program. The common theme in the responses (n=4) was improved student attitude. Of particular note was one participant’s perception that “the Uplift Mentor Program was successful because it changed their conversations, it changed their attitude towards school.” Another focus group participant stated “from what I can see it was improvement. The two students I know had issues with anger and the program provided them with someone to go to. They used to get aggravated easily and one thought I was uninterested in helping him and there was antagonism, so they would not see as much growth that would have happened in another class, so I encouraged the student to get another mentor, and that worked well.” One focus group participant noted that “I have to say that recently, I have not seen these students on the suspension list and they are staying on track.” Another participant agreed with this comment and stated “yes, there is more accountability; the students eventually take ownership for their success.” One focus group participant noted that “the staff knows that Uplift Mentor Program is a safe place for students to go and teachers trust the program and value it.” One teacher in the focus group commented that “Uplift Mentor

Program helps students get through external factors that interfere with learning then I as the teacher can get to the content.”

It was clear from the analysis of the focus group responses that there was a perceived positive change in the Uplift Mentor Program student participants’ attitude and that the students took ownership for their learning as a result of participating in the program. The common themes of adults caring about the students, adult support, improved student attitude, relationships and increased student accountability were evident in the focus group participants’ responses. These responses provided qualitative information that supports the finding in the quantitative student achievement data that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program improved in their core classes. Although the focus group teachers and mentors felt that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to students performing better on their End of Course exams and achieving more growth, the quantitative data did not support this perception. While teachers and mentors perceived that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program demonstrated improved behavior as a result of the participating in the program, there was not sufficient suspension data to confirm this perception. None of the students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program and none of the students in the control group received long term suspensions from school during the case study year. Very few students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program (n=13) and very few students in the control group (n=7) received short term suspensions from school during the case study year.

School Administrator Interviews

Interviews were conducted with the school principal, school assistant principal and the Uplift Mentor Program coordinator (see Appendix D). The school principal was interviewed separately from the assistant principal and the Uplift Mentor Program coordinator. Other than

the principal, the other two school administrators were chosen for the interview because they worked directly with the Uplift Mentor Program. One of the administrators was the original organizer of the Uplift Mentor Program and later transitioned coordination of the program to the second administrator who was chosen for the interview. There were five major categories of questions during the interview which provided sixteen individual interview questions. The five major categories of questions sought to gain school administrators' perception about the program's implementation, engagement, support, equity, student learning and student social engagement in school. The responses were analyzed for the overall school administrators' perception of improved student performance, improved behavior and improved attendance as a result of participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. The overall patterns in the interview responses showed that there were some common themes in the perceptions of school administrators about the Uplift Mentor Program. The school administrators perceived that the students' interaction with the mentors gave the students a place to get help. One administrator noted that "student attendance at school has been helped by the Uplift Mentor Program." One administrator noted that "I have had an Uplift student come to my office who came to school early to report a problem before it became a Black and Hispanic fight. She has learned that any adult is here to help."

As it relates to human and financial support for the program, the principal noted that "my investment has been to commit staff to support the program. The church provided funding and I designated grant funds to support the Uplift Mentor Program." The principal confirmed the teachers' perception that a full time staff position was committed for coordination of the Uplift Mentor Program along with coordination responsibilities for the Future Scholars and Communities in Schools Program.

School administrators perceived that participation in the Uplift Mentor Program has had a significant impact on improved student attendance. One administrator noted that “related to attendance, some students might take school more seriously. Like the Hispanic students who were called personally to follow-up with them on their attendance, this call seemed to make them more committed to coming to school.” While school administrators perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program had a significant impact on improved student attendance, the quantitative data did not support this perception for program students in general. Hispanic students and multi-racial students did demonstrate improved attendance but the numbers of Hispanic (n=16) and multi-racial (n=5) students in the study was too small to generalize to a larger population. School administrators noted that parent involvement did not improve as much as they would like to have seen. The principal noted that parents are involved in differing ways. She stated that “you have to define parent involvement. We have the Saturday programs. The attendance can be outstanding at one event and the next time there will be only 4 people. I have tried to reach parents and people in the community.” The principal even made visits to other churches and met with more parents and had additional contact with students at churches. She further noted that “parents are busy and it does not matter what you offer them, sometimes they will not come to the school.” One administrator noted that “even if the parents do not come, students are encouraged to bring anyone over the age of 25 to support them.”

Administrators perceived that students at Millbrook High School had an equitable opportunity to participate in the Uplift Mentor Program. One administrator noted “yes depending on the need is it equitable, I don’t encourage students who have other options to be in the program but if they asked they could join the program. But we know some students just want to be a part of the fun that they see but they don’t know all the work that the program requires.”

School administrators noted that stability and sustainability are most important to this program. The program coordinator noted that the administrator “had to increase the staff to manage volunteers and we could not make demands unless we had the additional staff and grant money. It keeps the program independent without losing the focus.” It was further noted that “there are hidden and overt costs to keeping the program operational, especially since this school is not longer the neediest school we don’t receive as much funding for programs that support at risk students.” The principal noted that without funding, “mentors are the oil of the wheels to keep things going.” One administrator noted that “the support and encouragement students receive from mentors, they may not get if they were not in the program. I spend a lot of time sending emails and talking one on one with the mentors and the students and this helps the students focus.”

School administrators perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to student academic success. One administrator noted “I would say EOC growth is impacted through weekly tutoring. I partner students with tutors on a regular basis and encourage students to email teachers to get support, so this indirectly impacts the student End of Course test performance.” The administrator further noted “it takes a lot to get grades to up, I can think of five kids that would not be here without this program. They fall through the cracks without an advocate. This does not come out in the data. Even teachers are surprised that some students keep coming to school.” It was noted by the coordinator that “there is a significant impact on student attitudes in class and having us pushing them helps. We may not turn them into A/B students, but we give them options and we eliminate excuses and barriers to school. We read over papers and offer computer access etc.”

School administrators perceived that student attendance was positively impacted by students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. One administrator noted “I personally feel there is a significant impact of attendance based on the data. We have students with issues of homelessness, transportation, parents moving, and parents not forcing kids to come to school. I don’t find there is an attendance issue, but it is because we stay after them. I feel that 85% to 90% of the students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program have adequate attendance because of the program.” It was further noted that the impact of the program on attendance is significant because “we stay on them and have attendance meetings.” There was a common perception among the administrators that student participation in the Uplift Mentor Program positively impacted student attendance.

School administrators also perceived that student participation in the Uplift Mentor Program positively impacted student behavior. One administrator noted that “I think it has a moderate effect on behavior. We focus on red light students who get suspended or failing. We want to get them to the green light and get them on track to graduate. It is significant to move from these levels and this works for the majority of students.” The administrator explained that red light students are student demonstrating significant risk of being suspended from school or failing academically.

The administrators at Millbrook High School encouraged parent/guardian involvement but were not sure that participation in the Uplift Mentor Program led to increased parental involvement. One administrator however, did state that “over the years I have seen some heavy engagement of parents. We like to push the relationship between the mentor and parents. We have had mentors visit kids in jail or take a mentees whole family to plays.”

Other school administrators noted a high level of principal support and stated that “the principal is one of the reasons why to program exist and she makes us feel that we can do our plans.” One administrator noted that “my position exists because the principal fought for it. She is always there for what we need and she attends the program activities.” The assistant principal noted that it was the principal who recognized “the need for additional staff to grow the program.”

As it related to the demographic profile of the students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program reflecting the overall demographic profile of the school population, administrators agreed with the teachers and mentors that the profile was not representative. However, it was noted that “the demographics of the program reflects the demographic disparities of the school. Our group is based on need and risk factors. We get referrals from teachers and administrators. If I see poor white kids in academic or behavioral need, they are in the program. We have had seven or eight white kids that had issues like drugs and single parent homes who have not joined the program upon invitation, but they are welcome if they want to join.” It was noted by the administration that students can opt out of the program. One administrator noted that the students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program “are not hostages.” It was noted that participation is by invitation. One administrator commented that “I pull up their grades and discuss if they want to be in the program; even if parents want them in the program, it is up to the student to participate. We do pester them to consider joining the program and most do come around and join the program.” Overall, administrators noted that the demographic profile of the Uplift Mentor Program Participants does not represent the overall demographic profile of the Millbrook High School student population.

School administrators perceived that Uplift Mentor Program students are more socially engaged as a result of their participation in the program. One administrator noted that “we steer them into niches that they are good at and interested in and work with them and encourage them to get involved throughout the school program. They also develop small cohorts amongst themselves. One example is that the female group does additional activities that make them a strong group that looks out for each other and they learn from each other.” Other factors that the school administrators perceived contributed to student success were relationship building, dropout prevention, and accountability of the students to some significant adult. These themes were also common themes found during the focus group discussion with mentors and teachers. One administrator noted that “the relationship is another factor that keeps kids accountable for their actions.”

While the school administrators perceived that the partnership had a positive impact on students, the quantitative student outcome data did not disclose statistically significant differences for students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. In fact, students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program did not perform better on NC EOCs nor significantly improve attendance when compared to students that did not participate. Although the quantitative data did not support the perception of school administrators regarding the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on student outcomes; the literature did support their perception. Henderson and Mapp examined 31 cases to demonstrate the relationship between student achievement and community involvement. Their studies indicated that in general school-family-community partnerships were more likely to increase student achievement. “When schools, families, and community groups worked together to support learning, children tended to do

better in school, stayed in school longer, and liked school more” (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7).

Church Missions Pastor Interview

An interview was conducted with the church missions pastor who supervised the mentors from the faith-based organization that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. There were five major categories of questions during the interview which provided sixteen individual interview questions (see Appendix D). The five major categories of questions sought to gain the missions pastor’s perception about the program’s implementation, engagement, support, equity, student learning and student social engagement in school. The responses were analyzed for the overall missions pastor’s perception of improved student performance, improved behavior and improved attendance as a result of participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. The overall patterns in the interview responses showed that there were some common themes in the perceptions of the missions pastor about the Uplift Mentor Program. During the interview with the Church Missions Pastor, he noted that a positive relationship with a significant adult was one of the strong points of the Uplift Mentor Program. He noted that “they get more focus in meeting with an adult who cares about their success and their academics, asking questions like what you made on your test, shows that someone cares about their success.” The Missions Pastor noted improved student attitude towards academic achievement by students once they began participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. He noted “I think that having the ability to come in and meet with the coordinator helps, she has conversation with students about their academics. I’m in my fifth year and I have seen how their attitudes have changed over the years, they now regret that they wasted their first years. I wish they had realized this their freshman year. I wish we could intervene earlier than the ninth grade.” The pastor further noted that the

Uplift Mentor Program provides a caring environment that allows students to belong and helps them know that adults are not the enemy and are interested in the students' future. The pastor perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program had a significant impact on student performance on End of Course tests as well as student performance in core classes. He stated, "I think that mentors help students prioritize their courses and help with their scheduling as well as managing their assignments." He further perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program had a significant impact on participating students' attendance. He commented, "I mentor six students, five of them would not have been coming to school without the program." As it relates to engagement and to mentors connecting with the school staff and the principal, the Missions Pastor noted, "mentoring has giving me an excuse to meet more of the teachers. I feel like a neighbor to the school. It feels like my school even though I have no children at the school. Mentoring helps me build relationships with the school. I'm grateful not to feel like a stranger."

The Missions Pastor perceived that the school administrators were significantly involved in the Uplift Mentor Program and supported the program. He noted that the mentor coordinators from the church met with the principal periodically about the program but met with the program coordinator often. He noted the support of the principal is unsurpassed. He stated "there is not resistance at this school. I work at five schools and this does not exist at every school. There is high ownership by the administrators." He noted that "adequate feels like the wrong word" as it related to the principal's support of the Uplift Mentor Program. The Missions' Pastor commented that "the principal is incredible with the resources. We need more field trips, we need more business outings. It takes more resources. She has dreams for more, but that takes money. It is the church's responsibility to find more resources for the school to use for the program. Their stewardship matters for us. We are putting time and money in the program and

when the principal manages it well, it encourages us to give more. The blessing in it for me is finding that collaborative effort – when the outcome is children’s success that is where we found unity.” It was noted by the pastor during the interview that the principal made a huge investment in the program by dedicating a full time staff member to coordinate the Uplift Mentor Program. He stated that he believed “it is hard to be an up-lifter and a disciplinarian at the same time.” Finally, the Missions’ Pastor noted that he perceived that continuity in leadership has been a major factor in the Uplift Mentor Program’s success. There has not been a change in pastoral leadership or in the school principalship in the past five years. A common theme during the interview with the Missions Pastor was relationship and student accountability. These themes resonated during the interviews with the school administrators as well as throughout the focus group responses.

Summary

The focus group participant responses to focus group questions (see Appendix C) and the interview responses to interview questions (see Appendix D) were not supported by the findings in the quantitative data. There was not data to support that the focus group participants’, the school administrators’ or the missions pastor’s perception that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to improved student growth on North Carolina End of Course tests. Similarly, quantitative data did not support the hypotheses that that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program increased engagement in school, decreased absences from school, or that students engaged in more appropriate behavior in school. There was a pattern between the perceptions of teachers, administrators and mentors and the quantitative data around core course passing rates. There was not sufficient data around student suspensions to support the focus group perceptions and interview perceptions related to the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program

on reduced student suspensions. There was a limited number of students in the study that were suspended, thus the researcher was unable to draw any conclusions around suspensions from school for the mentor program group or the control group. Absenteeism improved for multi-racial students participating in the program, however, the limited number of multi-racial students in the study (n=5) was too small to make statistically significant comparisons between the two groups. In conclusion, while the focus group participants and the interviewees perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to improved student outcomes; overall these perceptions were not supported by the quantitative data collected in this study. While these perceptions were not supported by the quantitative data collected in this study; as noted in the review of the literature, these perceptions aligned with the findings of several scholars (Bafile, 2010; Ceperly, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Michael et al., 2007; Paredes & Ugarte 2009; Roby, 2004; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Westmoreland et al., 2009).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Overview

This study explored the perceived impact of partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations on student academic and behavioral success by examining the impact of a specific partnership--the Uplift Mentor Program partnership--a faith-based partnership with a high school in the Wake County Public School System in North Carolina. The Uplift Mentor Partnership was developed by faculty at Millbrook High School and members of Crossroads Fellowship Church with a goal of improving student academic and behavioral success. The study sought to determine whether students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program experienced more academic and social gains than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the Uplift Mentor Program. A mixed methods approach involving qualitative and quantitative data was used for the study because little is known about the impact of faith based partnerships on student success. Using qualitative data enriches quantitative information by providing personal perceptions gained by administrators and teachers about the program. To gain these perceptions, the study included a focus group with teachers and mentors who served Uplift Mentor Program participants and interviews with school administrators, and church missions pastor. The study also sought to add to the literature related to the impact of school partnerships with faith-based organizations on student academic and social outcomes.

Summary of Related Research

Sanders and Harvey (2002) noted an increased interest and focus on partnerships among schools and community organizations began as early as 2001, when schools and families increased collaboration and partnering to improve schools and to have better outcomes for students. Additionally, as early as 2001, Glasman and Crowson (2001) noted an increased

interest and movement towards more school and community partnerships. They noted however, that these relationships needed further examination and more study to understand the partnerships. Later in 2008, school districts engaged in instructional reform to improve instruction in schools and began to reach out to external service providers to assist the school systems in the reform of instruction in schools (Coburn et al., 2008). Several scholars found that school systems have benefited from partnerships with community organizations by increased capacity to improve student outcomes and improved access to resources (Coburn et al., 2008; Gamoran et al., 2003; Kerr et al., 2006; Marsh et al., 2005). While this study was of a high school partnership with a faith-based organization, Sanders and Lewis (2005) stated that there had been more renewed interest in elementary schools than in high schools. They noted that high schools were very large and complex, thus there was a slower interest in studying the impact of these partnerships on student academic outcomes. Not only were partnerships between schools and community organizations important to student academic learning, but also to the alleviation of nonacademic barriers (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008). Collectively, nonacademic barriers were identified by several researchers as “developmental risk factors such as emotional and behavioral problems, unmet basic needs for good nutrition, involvement with antisocial peers, unstable housing, inadequate family supporters and family conflict” (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008; Doll & Lyon, 1998; Early & Vonk, 2001; Lawson & Anderson-Butcher, 2001). While this study did not find significant data to support a positive impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on student outcomes, further studies of this type of partnership might examine these nonacademic barriers in the context of the partnership.

Although research exists about school-community partnerships (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2008; Cnaan & Boddie, 2002; Dixit, 2002; Friend, 2000; Sinha, 2006), it was also noted as early

as 2001 that a striking gap persisted which explored partnerships between public schools and faith-based organizations (Shirley, 2001). Shirley (2001) noted “there was evidence that congregations could be powerful allies with schools in the struggle to provide a safe environment for urban youth and to provide them with a high-quality education” (p. 227). This study provided some insight into the impact of community involvement as well as the impact of faith-based relationships with schools on achievement, improved attendance and improved discipline.

Impact of Community Involvement on Student Achievement and Attendance

Family and community involvement in schools was linked strongly to improvements in academic achievement of students, better school attendance, and improved school programs and quality (Michael et al., 2007). Westmoreland et al. (2009) noted that schools engaging families could lead to improved readiness for school, improved student achievement, improved social engagement with others and improved behavior. Sheldon (2003) noted in an earlier study that the degree to which schools worked to overcome barriers to family and community engagement was an indication of how well students would perform on state achievement tests. He suggested further that schools’ efforts to involve families and the community in students’ learning may have been a useful approach to help students achieve in school, especially for students in early elementary grades (Sheldon, 2003). The Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University conducted a study in March 2008 called Project Appleseed. This study found that schools that engaged the community in its efforts found a greater capacity to create successful learning environments (Mediratta et al., 2008). Sheldon and Epstein (2005) found partnerships that focused on specific subjects helped improve students’ mathematics skills and achievement. The Uplift Mentor Program did not focus on improving student outcomes in specific subjects. Furthermore, the program focused more on mentoring than on academic tutoring. The focus

group responses in this study indicated that the mentors and teachers perceived that the program had more impact on student social and behavioral outcomes than on academic achievement. Sanders and Herting (2000) found that students' perception of teacher and parental academic support and church involvement indirectly influenced achievement through their positive and significant influences on students' academic self-concepts and school behaviors. Other scholars found a relationship between student achievement and community involvement (Ceperley, 2005; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). According to Ceperley (2005), family involvement positively impacted academic success and attendance.

Scholars noted a positive relationship between absenteeism and community partnerships. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) found that strong school, family, and community partnerships predicted improved student attendance. Sheldon and Epstein (2004) found that school-family-community partnership practices can significantly decrease absenteeism. Roby (2004) reported a significant relationship between student absenteeism and student achievement.

Impact of Community Involvement on Student Discipline

Over the past decade, several scholars have pointed out the link between community collaboration with schools and improvement in student behavior. In a longitudinal study, Sheldon and Epstein (2002) found that students were disciplined fewer times when they were sent to the principal's office if schools engaged families and the community to improve student outcomes. They also found that quality partnerships contributed to fewer discipline infractions by students. Other scholars found that family and community involvement positively impacted student behavior and overall school discipline (Ceperley, 2005; Michael et al., 2007)). Research clearly supported the notion that community partnerships positively impacted student discipline. However, the research was more limited as to the specific impact of school and faith-based

partnerships on student discipline. This study sought to contribute to the literature on the impact of faith-based organization mentoring and tutoring on school discipline. However, a limited number of students (n=20) in this study were suspended from school, thus the study provided a limited amount of data for the researcher to be able to determine the effect size using the Mann-Whitney U Tests. Further studies of these types of partnerships with a larger sample might examine the impact of the partnerships on student discipline.

School and Faith-Based Partnerships

Over the last few decades, many scholars have renewed their focus on the promise of school and community partnerships to include faith-based partnerships. Colgan (2001) noted that over a ten year span from 1991 to 2001, the number of partnerships between school districts and faith-based organizations increased 37%. Barry et al. (2006) conducted a study designed to assess how a faith-based prevention model impacted elementary school, middle school, and high school youths' views on risk factors. The factors studied included accessibility to alcohol, tobacco or other drugs, academic achievement, self-concept, peer behavior, and interactions between parent and child. Their study indicated that there is promise for faith-based interventions and confirmed the notion that a faith-based community can effectively implement a program to impact youth academic success. Investigators found that the program they studied significantly impacted each risk factor positively. Their results suggested that a faith-based prevention model can positively affect participating youth. This study examined the perception that teachers and mentors had of the impact of faith-based partnering on student attitudes towards school success but did not examine students' perceptions of the impact of the faith-based partnership on their success. Further studies might examine student perceptions as well as teacher and mentor perceptions.

The Houston Independent School District developed a strategic plan for engaging faith-based organizations in supporting student achievement. The Houston Independent School District (HISD) felt that faith-based organizations were important in their efforts to improve student outcomes and improve the quality of education in the HISD. District leaders sought to build as many partnerships with faith-based organizations as they did with other businesses and community organizations (Allen & Allen, 2011).

To ensure effectiveness with school and faith-based partnerships, a framework for partnerships and the collaboration process was needed. The typology of collaboration as described by Epstein et al. (2002) provided a framework for all types of collaboration within partnerships that existed between schools, families and communities (see Table 1).

Organization of the Study

A review of the literature around partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations revealed several themes. Authors continued to discuss the significance of the separation of church and state as well as debated whether faith-based organizations could provide sustainable relationships which improve social engagement (Benzanson, 2006, Church, 2004 and Billingsley, 2003). In addition, other authors described faith-based organizations as social service entities (Garland et al. 2008). Bositis (2007) pointed out that the church has served as the cornerstone for communities of color, implementing essential programs to ensure the equitable distribution of public goods and services and the promotion of public programs. And lastly, authors identified the need for accountability, evaluation and outcomes resulting from faith-based partnerships (Hendrie, 2003, Fagan et al, 2007).

After reviewing the literature, this study examined the perceived impact of a school partnership with a faith-based organization which was designed to provide mentors for students.

Standardized test scores, core class passing rates, attendance rates, and suspension rates for students participating in the Millbrook High School Uplift Mentor Program were compared to the standardized test scores, core course passing rates, attendance rates, and suspension rates for a similar demographic sample of students who did not participate in the program to determine if End of Course exam growth scores, core course passing rates and attendance showed improvement while student suspensions from school decreased.

Secondly, a focus group was used to gather and evaluate information on how teachers and mentors perceived the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on students. In addition, the focus group was conducted to gather personal experiences of the teachers and mentors with the mentor program. So as not to bias the information collected from the teachers and mentors; administrators were interviewed separately to gather the same type of information gathered from the teachers and mentors. Lastly, interviews were conducted with the school administrators and the church missions pastor to gather and evaluate information on how they perceived the Uplift Mentor Program impacted student outcomes and to gather personal experiences with the mentor program.

Nature of the Study

Academic and behavioral outcomes for students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program were compared to academic and behavioral outcomes for a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the Uplift Mentor Program to determine if a significant difference existed in the outcomes of the two groups. Teachers and mentors participated in a focus group to gather their perceptions about student improved attitude towards school and program implementation. Focus group participant responses were compiled and analyzed. School administrators and the church pastor of missions participated in interviews to gather their

perceptions about improved student attitude towards school and program implementation. Descriptive statistics were analyzed to determine if a significant difference existed between the outcomes for the two groups. This study examined the difference between the groups. The researcher used the Mann-Whitney U Test, a non-parametric measure, to analyze the data. The Mann-Whitney U Test is a non-parametric test which does not rely on normal distribution and is used to compare two independent groups of sampled data. The Mann-Whitney U Test makes no assumptions about the distribution normality of the data (Pallant, 2007). Finally, G-Power tests were conducted to determine the significance of the difference between the two groups.

Research Hypotheses and Research Questions

The following research hypotheses were tested:

1. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved growth targets on the NC End of Course exams more than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
2. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a higher passing rate of core classes than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.
3. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a lower number of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the program.
4. Students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had fewer absences in school than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program.

Secondly, a focus group was used to gather and evaluate information on how teachers and mentors perceived the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on students. In addition, the focus group was conducted to gather personal experiences of the teachers and mentors with the mentor program. So as not to bias the information collected from the teachers and mentors; administrators were interviewed separately to gather the same type of information gathered from the teachers and mentors. Three research questions were addressed:

1. To what extent did teachers of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program have an improved attitude about school?
2. To what extent did mentors of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program have an improved attitude about school?
3. To what extent did school administrators and church leaders who worked with the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

Context for the Study

Demographics of the Study District and Study School

The district chosen for the study is a large, urban, public, school district in central North Carolina. The district served approximately 143,000 students in one hundred and three elementary schools, thirty-two middle schools, twenty-four high schools, and four special/optional schools.

Demographics of the School in this Study

Millbrook High School was the setting for a faith-based partnership between the Wake County Public School System and Crossroads Fellowship Church. Millbrook High School opened the 2010-11 school year seeking authorization to become an International Baccalaureate magnet school. At the time of this study, the school was scheduled to have its authorization visit in October of the 2010-11 school year. Prior to this time, Millbrook was a traditional high school. This school resides within the Raleigh municipality and is located in the north-central region of the district. The enrollment for the 2009-10 school year was 2,432, and in 2010-11 enrollment increased slightly to 2,443.

Uplift Mentor Program

A partnership was established between a faith-based organization and a high school in the Wake County Public School System. The Uplift Mentor Partnership was created by members of the Crossroads Fellowship Church and the faculty of Millbrook High School to “build a supportive and trusting relationship that allows the mentor to guide the student towards personal growth, to help the student experience success in his/her personal life, and to improve the academic performance and attendance in all classes” (Powell, n.d., p. 1).

The program goals focused on four critical components: (1) Academic Improvement; (2) Attendance; (3) Discipline; and (4) Engagement. Specifically, the program objectives focused on improving student academic and behavioral outcomes, reducing absenteeism and improving student engagement with adults.

Participants in the Study

Students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program in the 2009-10 school year and remained in the program for the 2010-11 school year were included in the mentor program group of students. A demographically matched pair of students was included in the control group. The demographic factors for matching were race, gender, grade and prediction score on the NC End of Course exams in English and Algebra. Teachers who taught student participants in the Uplift Mentor Program and mentors who served the student participants in the Uplift Mentor Program participated in the focus group, and three school administrators and two church leaders participated in the interviews. Ten teachers were not available to participate in the focus group due to conflicts in their schedules.

Analysis of Results

The data for the study were analyzed in two ways. First the student academic and behavioral outcome data were examined. The analysis of the difference between the student outcome data for the mentor program group and the control group was used to examine the hypotheses. Next, an analysis of the focus group participant responses and an analysis of the interview responses were conducted. The analysis of the responses was used to answer the research questions.

Mentor program group data and control group data were examined for differences in growth scores on the NC End of Course tests, differences in group attendance rates, differences in number of core classes passed and differences in suspension rates. The distribution of short term student suspension days as well as the distribution of long term student suspension days was examined. The distribution of growth scores on the NC End of Course tests was examined as well as the distribution of days absent. The frequency of days absent and days suspended was

also examined. All of the descriptive statistics included mentor program group outcomes prior to participating in the Uplift Mentor Program and program participant outcomes after participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. The descriptive statistics also included control group outcomes for a matched pair of students who did not participate in the Uplift Mentor Program.

Conclusions

Research Hypothesis 1

Research hypothesis 1 stated that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved growth targets on the NC End of Course exams more than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program. The null hypothesis was that the distribution of growth for the 2010-11 school year was the same across categories of program type. The Mann-Whitney U Test demonstrated a significance of .215 which allowed the researcher to retain the null hypothesis indicating that there was not a significant difference between the mentor program group and the control group's growth on the NC EOC exams.

Research Hypothesis 2

Research hypothesis 2 stated that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a higher passing rate of core classes than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program. The null hypothesis was that the distribution of ratio for the 2009-10 school year was the same across categories of program type. The Mann-Whitney U Test demonstrated a significance of .003 which allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. The null hypothesis was that the distribution of ratio for the 2010-11 school year was the same across categories of program type. The Mann-Whitney U Test demonstrated a significance of .053 which allowed the researcher to retain the null hypothesis thus

demonstrating that there was not a significant difference between the ratio of courses passed by student who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program and students who did not participate.

Research Hypothesis 3

Research hypothesis 3 stated that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had a lower number of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions than a similar demographic group of students who did not participate in the program. The null hypothesis was that the distribution of the number of days that students were short term suspended during the 2010-11 school year was the same across categories of program type. The researcher was not able to conduct a Mann-Whitney U Test for suspension data due to missing values. A limited number (n=22) of students in the study received suspensions. A second null hypothesis was that the distribution of the number of days that students were short term suspended during the 2009-10 school year was the same across categories of program type. Likewise, the researcher was not able to conduct a Mann-Whitney U Test for 2009-10 SY suspension data due to missing values. A limited number (n=22) of students in the study received suspensions. Thirdly, a null hypothesis was that the distribution of the number of days that students were long term suspended during the 2010-11 school year was the same across categories of program type. No students in the study received long-term suspensions in school year 2009-10 or in school year 2010-11.

Research Hypothesis 4

Research hypothesis 4 stated that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had fewer absences in school than students from a similar demographic group who did not participate in the program. The null hypothesis was that the distribution of the number of days that students were absent during the 2009-10 school year was the same across categories of

program type. The Mann-Whitney U Test demonstrated a significance of .011 which rejected the null hypothesis. As second null hypothesis was that the distribution of days that students were absent during the 2010-11 school year was the same across categories of program type. The Mann-Whitney U Test demonstrated a significance of .000 which allowed the researcher to reject the null hypothesis. The Cohen D Effect size was small (.24) for the distribution of growth for SY 2010-11 across categories of program type and thus not immediately generalizable to those in a larger population. The Cohen D Effect size was large (.8) for distribution of ratio for courses passed for SY 2009-10 and was medium (.52) for SY 2010-11. The effect size was medium for days absent (.51) in SY 2009-10 and medium for days absent (.57) in SY 2010-11 and thus generalizable with some caution to a larger population. The effect size for the difference in days absent was small (.27), therefore not immediately generalizable to those in a larger population.

Research Question 1

Research question one examined to what extent did teachers of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

Research Question 2

Research question two examined to what extent did mentors of students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

Research Question 3

Research question three examined to what extent did school administrators and church leaders who worked with the Uplift Mentor Program perceive that students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program had an improved attitude about school?

There were five areas of discussion during the focus group and interviews: program implementation and partnership, multi-level leadership and engagement, multi-level support, program equity, and student learning and social involvement in school activities. Focus group and interview participant responses were analyzed for each of the areas. The overall patterns in the responses showed that the frequencies and percentages of responses demonstrated that teachers and mentors perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to student success. Eighty-six percent of the teachers (n=18) that responded to questions about program impact on student success perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to improved student attitude towards school. Ninety-five percent of the teachers and mentors responses (n=20) also indicated that they perceived that the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to improved student attendance for those students that participated in the program. The patterns also showed that focus group and interview respondent groups had high perceptions of the Uplift Mentor Program impact on student involvement in clubs and school extra-curricular and co-curricular activities. The results for the impact on student social involvement showed that teachers perceived that students in the Uplift Mentor Program somewhat bonded together as a club. One teacher's comment was that "many of the Uplift Mentor Program students joined other clubs as a group and attended school events together." This was an example comment that indicated that teachers perceived that students were more socially involved.

Overall the study determined no significant relationship between participation in the Uplift Mentor Program and student academic improvement. However, on average female students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent from school more days when compared to female students in the control group. Data on race/ethnicity revealed a similar pattern for African-American and Hispanic students. African-American and Hispanic students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent from school more days when compared to African-American and Hispanic students in the control group. However, among multi-racial students, participation in the Uplift Mentor Program had a positive impact on student outcomes. For example, multi-racial students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent fewer days than multi-racial students in the control group. Multi-racial students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent on the average the same number of days that as were multi-racial students in the control group. The effect size for the difference in days absent was not immediately generalizable to those in a larger population as it was a small effect size (.27).

Assumptions of the Study

The study identified three assumptions. First, this study utilized a focus group research design that relied on teacher and program mentor self-reported responses and the study utilized interviews which relied on school administrator and church leader self-reported responses. It was assumed that respondents would truthfully and accurately answer the focus group and interview questions. However, Babor and Del Boca (1992) noted that even though the validity of self-report data is occasionally questioned, research supports that it provides accurate data. They also noted that two issues impacting the validity of self-reported data is how sensitive the requested information is and the “characteristics of the respondents.” Although the character of

the respondents could not be determined for this research study, the questions during the focus group and the interviews were not highly sensitive, which leads to the assumption of accurate and truthful responses from participants. Participants were notified that the focus group and the interviews were confidential, individual results would not be shared, and appropriate data storage methods were utilized. Second, the study assumed the focus group participants would be able to answer the focus group questions concerning their perception of the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on student academic, behavioral and social/emotional outcomes as well as the overall program implementation. The focus group was conducted with teachers who had taught and mentors who had served students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. Finally, the study design assumed that participating teachers, church mentors, school administrators and church leaders possessed the knowledge to respond accurately to the focus group questions and interviews.

Limitations of the Study

There were limitations to this study. First, students were chosen by the school administration to participate in the partnership. Therefore students were not randomly assigned to the mentor program group or to the control group. This selection of students for the mentor program group by the school administration made the study less objective and thus the results were less able to be generalized to a larger population. An additional limitation was that North Carolina End of Course (EOC) exams were not administered for every course at the high school level. Therefore, not all students were enrolled in an EOC course during the time period of this study. As a result, an exact match for the comparison groups was not possible within the scope of this study. An additional limitation was that student data were not identifiable; therefore, it was not possible to determine whether any of the student participants were members of the

Crossroads Fellowship Church. If some of the students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program were members of the Crossroads Fellowship Church, it was possible that the students could demonstrate improved academic and behavioral outcomes to please their missions pastor. Additionally, the perception of the mentors as to whether or not the students had an improved attitude about school could be biased. Another limitation was that students took different EOC courses from year to year and their performance on the EOC test could not be solely attributed to their participation in the program. It was not possible to determine whether improved performance on EOC tests was due to participation in the mentoring program, classroom instruction, and/or other factors. Similarly, all students attending Millbrook High School may have received independent mentoring and tutoring through programs other than the Uplift Mentor Program, which may have influenced student outcomes. Therefore, the pre-program EOC results may not have a direct relationship to the post-program results. Contributing to this limitation in the study was the change in North Carolina's state testing program which required that high school students take end of course exams only in Algebra I, Biology, and English I. As a result of this change, the EOC exams that each cohort of students took varied significantly from school year to school year. The variation in EOC exams taken limited the ability to compare the improvement of the exact EOC exam growth scores for students for school years prior to participating and after participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. A final known limitation of the study was that due to logistical challenges and coordination challenges, teachers and mentors participated in the focus group together. A combined focus group may have limited responses by teachers about the impact of the Uplift Mentor Program on student success and responses by mentors about teacher and administrator engagement with the program. Further

studies of this partnership or other partnerships similar to this study should conduct separate focus groups for the teachers who teach the students and mentors who serve the students.

Implications and Recommendations

There were no significant relationships in the academic outcomes for students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. However, the descriptive statistics and the Cohen D effect size data showed trends for a medium impact on student absenteeism. These findings have implications for partnerships, as well as bring forth recommendations for further study. The Uplift Mentor Program appeared to focus more on mentoring than on tutoring. Therefore, the results of the study seemed to indicate a more significant impact of the program on the behavioral outcomes and less of an impact on the NC End of Course exam growth scores or on the rate of passing core courses after students participated in the Uplift Mentor Program. This dynamic warrants further study as to why students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program demonstrated a decrease in growth on the End of Course exams.

Significance of the Study

Additional research is needed on the impact of partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations to identify positive and effective models of community and school-based partnerships with the focus being on effective faith-based and school partnerships. As noted earlier, in personal communication with Dr. Joyce Epstein, director of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships, Dr. Epstein stated that there are few studies of the effects of one community partner vs. another in part because such comparisons are very difficult to design and measure (J. Epstein, personal communication, November 18, 2010). Therefore, the impact of one partnership versus the impact of a different partnership on student academic and behavioral success is very difficult to measure and demonstrate a casual relationship to the

change. The literature was clear that faith-based partnerships could have a far reaching positive impact on student academic and behavioral outcomes. However, these partnerships needed structure, accountability, and clear objectives. As the research is expanded on faith-based partnerships with schools and school systems, it will be interesting to see how policies are developed to guide these relationships since written policy seemed to be limited or even absent at the time of this study. As indicated in the literature review of this study, it was generally accepted that community partnerships had a positive impact on student academic and behavioral outcomes. However, there are remaining unanswered questions about the impact of faith-based partnerships with schools on student learning, student attitude toward school, and student discipline which this study sought to examine. This study examined the impact that a school-faith-based organization partnership had on student academic and behavioral success.

Research Body

This study sought to contribute to closing the gap in the field of research on these specific school and faith-based partnerships. The study could also potentially add to the research body that is attempting to provide effective models of partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations and the impact of these partnerships on student outcomes.

Policy Implications for Educational Leaders

This study provides a framework to guide policy development and framework. In the administration of education policy, the church may be used as a mediating structure to provide social services for communities in need. More importantly, these partnerships may enable schools, families, and communities to work together to serve the needs and interests of children of the school districts. Superintendents and faith-based organizational leaders who are interested in making a bigger impact in the lives of children face important public policy and leadership

challenges in order for these partnerships to produce effective and meaningful organizational and educational outcomes. The study provided suggestions for implementing an effective partnerships and ideas for ensuring fiscal accountability. Additionally, the study provided ideas for ensuring that partnerships are focused on student academic, behavioral and social/emotional outcomes and not opportunities for faith-based organizations to proselytize.

Needs for Further Research

The research study adds to the body of research surrounding partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations. However, there are many aspects of research that could be generated from this study. With the expansion of the White House Office of Faith-based and Community Partnerships under the administration of President Obama across several departments including the Department of Education, state education agencies are encouraged to partner with faith-based organizations. The increased emphasis on these partnerships provides opportunities for further research.

Further research in determining a universally accepted and recognized definition of faith-based organization would be beneficial. Different faith-based organizations, federal departments, state agencies, educational administrators, states, and districts utilize varying methods of defining faith-based organizations. A clearly defined definition can assist school districts as they seek to develop policy which can guide these partnerships. A universally accepted definition could assist with alignment of training, resources, and practices that are grounded in research which impacts student achievement and school and district philosophy about partnerships.

Replications of this research study in other areas with differing demographics or in other settings with a larger program population would be beneficial. This research study was in a

large, urban district in North Carolina; however, the program population was small. A study that included a larger population may make the results more generalizable to other partnerships.

Furthermore, a study that compared the impact of a partnership at the elementary school level with the impact of a partnership at the high school level could contribute to the research.

There are limited research studies that revealed whether partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations positively impacted student achievement. The limited research points to a need for more research on the impact of these partnerships on student academic, behavioral, social and emotional outcomes. Further study on the differentiated amount of time that students participate in a faith-based partnership would add to the research base. The school and faith-based partnership that was researched for this study yielded results that indicated student academic growth on NC End of Course exams decreased in some cases. Further research into why this decrease may have occurred is warranted. Additionally, further study on what the potential outcomes would have been if the students participated in more tutoring rather than mentoring activities. Further study comparing programs that focus on mentoring to programs that focus on tutoring could contribute to the research base on partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations. Further study needs to examine the impact that parental involvement and how environmental factors outside of school might impact student academic and behavioral outcomes. Specifically an examination of differences between a mentor program group and a control group around these factors needs to be conducted. Further studies of school and faith-based partnerships might also conduct a focus group with students that participate in these partnerships.

A study that utilized the typology of collaboration as described by Epstein et al. (2002) which provided a framework for all types of collaboration within partnerships that existed

between schools, families and communities could be conducted. Such a study would provide examples in the research base to help make partnering more formal, capable of assessing the needs, processes and outcomes of any collaborative partnership. Furthermore, other types of community partnerships with schools could be compared to faith-based partnerships with schools to determine which most positively contributes to student outcomes. Further study of partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations as well as with other community organizations could study the impact of the affective side of students (social and emotional behavior) and the impact of other environmental factors on the ability of the partnership to positively impact student outcomes and what barriers to success these factors might create.

Summary

There has been an increased interest in partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations among educators as a method of positively impacting student learning. This study examined a school and faith-based partnership that had not been studied and where the effectiveness of the partnership and the impact on student achievement had not been determined. Overall the study determined no significant relationship between participation in the Uplift Mentor Program and student academic improvement.

In the era of increased accountability, it is important to thoroughly research programs that are intended to impact student achievement. This chapter outlined the results and conclusions from study of a school and faith-based partnership. It provided a summary of the related research and reviewed the organization of the study. The nature of the study was examined. The research questions and context of the study was reviewed. An analysis of results was provided and conclusions were stated. Assumptions and limitations were stated. Implications were discussed

and recommendations were made. The professional significance of the study was outlined and areas of further research were examined.

Although the study did not find relationships that demonstrated a significant difference in the growth scores on End of Course exams between the mentor program group and the control group, it did show significant differences between the mentor program group and the control group for multi-racial students participating in the Uplift Mentor Program. Among multi-racial students, participation in the Uplift Mentor Program had a positive impact on student outcomes. For example, multi-racial students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent fewer days than multi-racial students in the control group. Multi-racial students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program were absent on the average the same number of days as were multi-racial students in the control group. Multi-racial students that participated in the Uplift Mentor Program achieved more growth on the NC EOC exams when compared to multi-racial students in the control group. However, the number of multi-racial students in the study was limited (n=5), thus the results may not be readily generalizable to a larger population. The data did not provide enough information about student suspensions due to the limited number of students (n=22) in the study who were suspended from school. As school system leaders seek to expand partnerships with community and faith-based organizations, it is essential that student achievement be the focus of the partnerships. In order to be successful, partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations should focus on student academic and behavioral success and leaders must not allow faith-based organizations to proselytize. Boston (2009) noted pushing religion and allowing religious organizations to proselytize was not one of the duties of public school officials. Continuing research was needed to identify positive and effective models of school and community partnerships, especially school partnerships with faith-based

organizations. Further research should examine the impact of partnerships that have strong organizational structure and clearly identified goals and desired outcomes in comparison to partnerships that are more loosely structured. Additionally, study of partnerships that focus on mentoring as compared to partnerships that focus on tutoring students could potentially contribute to the literature. School systems could benefit from lessons learned in studies of the impact of faith-based partnerships on student academic and behavioral outcomes. Further research on these partnerships can help answer the question of this study – Impact on Student Achievement and Discipline.

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APPENDIX A: THE WCPSS BOARD OF EDUCATION VOLUNTEER POLICY

5422 RELATED R&P

- 5422.1 The Board of Education encourages schools to develop and maintain a strong volunteer program that provides varied opportunities for parents and members of the community to be active partners in support of the instructional program and school climate. The Board encourages schools to be sensitive to a parent's limitation of time and distance from a school which may restrict some parents from volunteer work and to use innovative strategies that support families and their involvement in school-related activities. For example, activities may be developed that allow at-home participation.
- 5422.2 All volunteers will complete an on-line application at a school. Volunteers will apply as Level 1, 2, 3 or 4.
- Level 1: Volunteer activity takes place with supervision and involves little or no student contact.
- Level 2: Volunteer activity takes place in a classroom or other group setting and is supervised by school staff.
- Level 3: Volunteer activity involves direct contact with students under limited supervision by school staff.
- Level 4: Volunteer activity allows unsupervised contact with student(s) on or off campus.
- 5422.3 Criminal background checks shall be required of all volunteers working individually with students under limited or no supervision by other staff (Level 3 and 4 activities) in programs that are sponsored or co-sponsored by the Wake County Public School System, that receive funding from the school system, or that collaborate with the school system.

5422.4 Volunteers, whose prior history, including criminal history, demonstrates a risk to the safety or well-being of students, will be denied participation in Level 3 and 4 activities. Conditions for rejecting a volunteer's participation in Level 3 and 4 activities may include but not be limited to the following:

- Conviction of or Plea of No Contest to any felony.
- Conviction of or Plea of No Contest to any misdemeanor that indicates the volunteer may pose a threat to the integrity or safety of the school environment.
- More than one DWI
- A pattern of criminal charges, even if the charges were dismissed, which cause concern that the volunteer may pose a threat to the integrity or safety of the school environment.

If the Wake County Public School System learns that an individual is a registered sex offender, this individual will be barred from volunteering at all four levels.

5422.5 All volunteers shall sign in when arriving on campus, shall wear a school-developed identification tag while participating in volunteer activities, and shall state where they will be during their visit. Volunteers shall sign out when departing the campus.

5422.6 Schools shall keep a record of the number of volunteers and volunteer hours assisting the school each year and report these figures to the Volunteer Coordinator in Prevention Services.

5422.7 Special training for tutoring and mentoring or other volunteer activities that require special skills may be required. Volunteers should understand the expectations of the school program, the issue of confidentiality, and any special procedures required by a particular school.

5422.8 Adult volunteers who are transporting students for school-sponsored activities or field trips in a privately owned vehicle should be aware that they may be held responsible for injuries to the students they are transporting. Volunteers must complete Form 1713b, "Notice to Drivers on School Field Trips," which certifies that their vehicle is covered by insurance as required by North Carolina state law before transporting students.

- 5422.9 All volunteers who are transporting students must hold a valid driver's license, have proof of insurance, and undergo a criminal and driving record background check. Volunteers, whose prior driving history, including criminal history, demonstrates a risk to the safety or well being of students, will be denied Level 3 and 4 clearances for transporting students. Criteria for rejecting a volunteer from transporting students may include but not be limited to the following:
- A history of a prior traffic violation or violations that reflect disregard for the safety of self and others.
 - Any conviction of DWI within the last 10 years is an automatic denial of clearance to transport students.
- 5422.10 The Board of Education maintains comprehensive general liability insurance which covers the Board, system employees, and school volunteers for liability incurred in the performance of their assigned duties. (Note the vehicle liability exception which is covered in 5422.8.)
- 5422.11 Prior to denial of participation in Level 3 and 4 activities or clearance for transporting students, a volunteer applicant will be notified of the tentative decision to deny access or clearance and the reasons therefore. The applicant shall be given 10 days to contact the Volunteer Coordinator to provide any corrections to the information used to make the determination or to provide extenuating data.
- 5422.12 A volunteer who is deemed to be a threat to the security of a school can be barred from the campus by the Director of Security or the school principal even if the volunteer has a clear criminal background check.
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APPENDIX B: WCPSS ADOPT-A-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP MOU

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING Wake County Public School System Adopt-A-School Initiative

This Memorandum of Understanding, effective for the 2009-2010 school year, is entered into between _____, (**Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization Name**) hereinafter referred to as **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**, the Wake County Public School System, hereinafter referred to as **WCPSS**, and _____, (**School Name**) hereinafter referred to as **School**.

Purpose

To formally establish a relationship between the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** and the **School** in coordinating and administering student mentoring/tutoring support, completion of service projects identified by school administration and other services mutually identified and agreed upon by the **School** and the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**.

I. Overview

The **WCPSS Community-Based or Faith-Based** initiative encourages the active involvement of **Community-Based or Faith-Based** groups in providing tutor/mentor support and other identified support that has been identified by the **School** administration, the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** and the **WCPSS**. The focus of this relationship will be to increase enrolled student's reading, writing and mathematics achievement through experiences that include a focus on character development to ensure that every student graduates on time.

The **WCPSS** Senior Director of Prevention Services and the **WCPSS** Adopt-A-School Coordinator will serve as the **WCPSS** liaisons to work with the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** and the **School** to develop communication between the two agencies and to resolve any problems or issues that may arise.

II. Specific Program Commitments

Through this partnership, the **WCPSS** and the **Community Based or Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** will collaborate to enhance and improve the academic performance of participating students.

WCPSS will:

1. Assist the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** in identifying new schools to participate in the **Community-Based or Faith-Based** initiative. Schools will be selected based on program support of the selected school site administration, proximity of the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** to the partnering school, and support of and willingness of the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** to work with the selected school site.
2. Designate a **WCPSS** employee to act as the liaison with the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** and **WCPSS**.
3. Cover the costs and perform background checks for **Community-Based or Faith-Based** volunteers who work in selected school sites and conduct annual checks of Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization personnel against the State Sex Offender and Public Protection Registry, the State Sexually Violent Predator Registry, and the National Sex Offender Registry. Under this agreement the Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization shall provide that only individuals who have been cleared by WCPSS shall be used to deliver goods or services to students.
4. Distribute this MOU to each school principal.
5. Facilitate communication between the **School** and **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** contact person.
6. Work with the **School** principal/contact person to resolve any issues or concerns if they arise.

The School Principal Agrees to:

1. Identify a **School** liaison dedicated to the implementation of the **Community-Based or Faith-Based** initiative.
2. Developing a written plan for use of the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization's** volunteers at the **School**. This plan will be developed in collaboration with the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**. In addition, the schools, not the faith-based partners, determine where volunteers are needed and in what capacity volunteers will be utilized.
3. Review and sign the MOU between the **School** and **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**. Return the signed MOU to the Senior Director, Prevention Services.
4. Identify students with the greatest need for supplemental instructional support in reading, mathematics and writing.
5. Provide the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** with test data and other relevant information on students, subject to written parental consent in accordance with federal laws, specifically FERPA, that will aid project staff in the development of individual education plans and evaluation of the written plan supplied by the building principal.
6. Share the **School's** curriculum plan and goals for all students who receive mentoring/tutoring from the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization's** volunteers.
7. Provide space in the **School** for the successful implementation of the mentoring/tutoring program, if established.
8. Maintain open communication regarding informing parents of the partnership between the **School** and the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**.
9. Ensure that parents of any student being transported by a school volunteer on a school-sponsored field trip have been notified in advance of the trip and provide documentation that the parental notice has been given. **No transporting of students for any non-school sponsored activities or field trips by faith-based volunteers must occur under any circumstances without parent consent being received prior to the activity or field trip**

occurring. Any non-school activities, field trips, etc., will not be endorsed by the Wake County Public School System nor be considered part of the agreement between the Wake County Public School System and the Community-Based or Faith-Based organization and the Adopt A School Initiative.

10. Ensure that any adult volunteers who are transporting students for school-sponsored activities or field trips in a privately owned vehicle are aware that they (the adult volunteer) will be held responsible for the students they are transporting. Volunteers must complete Form 1731b, "Notice to Drivers on School Field Trips," which certifies that their vehicle is covered by insurance as required by North Carolina state law before transporting students.
11. Ensure that all volunteers transporting students hold a valid driver's license, have proof of insurance, and undergo a criminal and driving record background check. All volunteers transporting students must be approved for Level 3 or Level 4 clearance prior to transporting any student.

The Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization Agrees to:

1. Designate individual(s) from the Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization to serve as liaison between the Adopt-A-School Coordinator, the schools, and the Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization to facilitate matters in a reasonable and timely manner.
2. Work closely with school administrators, teachers, and other personnel to create the program and provide services and resources that enhance each student's school experience.
3. Provide to the Adopt-A-School Coordinator a survey document of identified available resources and services.
4. Review and sign the MOU between **School** and **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**.
5. Provide information as requested by the **School** or individual student or family member of any service or program provided by the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization**.
6. Focus will be on the following areas to assist students and schools: mentor/tutor sessions, service projects identified by each school administration, and other activity which supports the students of the **School**.
12. Ensure that all contact between the **Faith-Based** volunteer and student is restricted to on-campus activities and school-sponsored events. **Non-school sponsored activities or field trips by faith-based volunteers must not occur under any circumstances without parent consent being received prior to the activity or field trip occurring. Any non-school activities, field trips, etc., will not be endorsed by the Wake County Public School System nor be considered part of the agreement between the Wake County Public School System and the Community-Based or Faith-Based organization and the Adopt A School Initiative.**
7. **Community-Based or Faith-Based** members will not engage in any way in proselytizing while conducting activities with students, regardless of the location of the activity, while acting as representatives of the AASI program or of the school.
8. Seek prior approval from Adopt-A-School Coordinator, or/school administrator before distributing any information or planning events and activities outside of school campuses.
9. Ensure that any adult volunteer who is transporting students for school-sponsored activities or field trips in a privately owned vehicle is aware that they (the **Community-Based or Faith-Based** volunteer) will be held responsible for injuries to the students they are transporting. That any volunteer transporting students for school-sponsored activities or field trips has

completed Form 1713b, "Notice to Drivers on School Field Trip," which certifies that their vehicle is covered by insurance as required by North Carolina state law before transporting students.

10. Ensure that any volunteer transporting students has received Level 3 or Level 4 clearance from WCPSS prior to transporting students.

The Community-Based or Faith-Based Liaison Agrees to:

- a. Ensure that resources and space(s) are provided to the **Community-Based or Faith-Based** tutor-mentors.
- b. Support curriculum updates and daily planning of the partnership between the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** and the **School**.
- c. Facilitate communication between the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** and the **School**.
- d. Assist the **Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization** in identifying students to be provided tutor-mentors and in identifying service projects that the **Community-Based or Faith-Based** Organizations may pursue with prior approval of the school principal.
- e. Ensure that all volunteers have registered and been approved as volunteers with the WCPSS Volunteer Registration System.
- f. Provide an updated list of all volunteers to the WCPSS Adopt-A-School Coordinator prior to the volunteer's assignment or initiation of service at a school site.

III. Miscellaneous

WCPSS and (Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization's Name) will make a good faith effort to perform the tasks each has agreed to undertake pursuant to this Memorandum of Understanding. Notwithstanding their mutual commitment to fulfill their obligations hereunder, it is expressly recognized and agreed that this Memorandum creates no legally enforceable obligations on part of either **WCPSS** or (Community-Based or Faith-Based Organization's Name). Either party may choose to dissolve this agreement with written notice, allowing thirty days to provide resolution with participants.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 20__ __

BY: _____
Assistant Superintendent
Student Support Services
Wake County Public School System

BY: _____ **Principal's Name**), Principal
(**School Name**)Wake County Public School System

BY: _____
BY:(**Community/Faith-Based School Contact's Name**) **Community/Faith-Based Coordinator**

APPENDIX C: UPLIFT MENTOR PROGRAM FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

This focus group discussion is on the faith-based partnership between Millbrook High School and Crossroads Fellowship Church, specifically *The Uplift Mentor Program*. The goals of the program are to improve student performance on NC End of Course (EOC) exams, improve student attendance, and reduce student discipline referrals. The *Uplift Mentor Program* focus group questions will seek to learn your perception about the program's implementation, engagement, support, equity, and student learning and development. This focus group is part of research conducted for a dissertation and the results may be used to inform expansion of faith-based partnerships. Your individual responses will be kept anonymous and the summary results will be provided to the school principal at the completion of the research.

Directions: Thinking about *The Uplift Mentor Program*, we will discuss student academic and behavioral performance. Specifically, we are interested in the program's impact on student performance in their core classes and on their EOC exams. We are also interested in your perceptions of student attitude toward performance on their EOCs, attendance, and discipline. When responding, please be as specific as possible and provide relevant examples.

Impact of Program on Student Attitude towards School

In what ways do you perceive that The Uplift Mentor Program helped participating students improve academically in their core classes?

If the Uplift Mentor Program helped participating students improve their NC *End of Course test scores*, to what do you attribute this?

Student Attitude Towards Performance on EOC Tests: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, participation in the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to students achieving improved EOC test composite scores? Do you think the Uplift Mentor Program had a 'minimal, moderate or significant' impact on students' attitude towards performance on the EOC tests? Why?

Student Attitude Towards Academic Achievement in Core Classes: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a 'minimal, moderate or significant' impact on students' attitude towards academic achievement in their core classes? Why?

Student Attitude Towards Attending School: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a 'minimal, moderate or significant' impact on students' attitude towards attending school? Why?

Student Attitude Towards Discipline : Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a 'minimal, moderate or significant' impact on students' attitude towards displaying appropriate behavior at school? Why?

Multi-Level Leadership and Engagement

In what ways do you perceive that Parents/Guardians of The Uplift Mentor Program students are more actively engaged with the mentors of the program and/or school staff? Please elaborate.

In what ways are you as a teacher/mentor of The Uplift Mentor Program students actively engaged with the mentors/teachers of the program? Please elaborate.

Do you perceive that administrators of Millbrook High School are actively engaged with mentors of the program? If so in what ways do you see them engaged? If not, what ways do you feel they could have been engaged? Please elaborate.

Do you perceive that administrators of Millbrook High School are actively engaged with students of the program? If so what ways do you see them engaged? If not what ways do you feel they could have been engaged with the students? Please elaborate.

Multi-Level Support

Do you feel that the Principal of Millbrook High School provides adequate (financial and human) support for The Uplift Mentor Program? If so, what are some examples of human support that was provided? If so, what are some examples of financial support that was provided?

Program Equity

Do you perceive that all the students at Millbrook High School have an equitable opportunity to participate in The Uplift Mentor program? How do you perceive that students are recruited for the program?

Do you perceive that the student participants of the Uplift Mentor program reflect the demographic (race/ethnicity) profile of the Millbrook High School student population? If so, what processes are you aware of that were used for the selection of students? Were students allowed to volunteer for the program? Were students allowed to opt out of the program if they were invited to participate?

Student Learning and Social Engagement in School

Do you believe that students who participated in The Uplift Mentor Program became more socially engaged in the school? If so, in what ways?

What other factors do you believe were responsible for Uplift Mentor Program participants' success?

Do you think the Uplift Mentor Program was a major factor in student improvement? Yes or No. Why?

APPENDIX D: UPLIFT MENTOR PROGRAM INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Thinking about the Uplift Mentor Program, we will discuss student academic and behavioral performance. Specifically, we are interested in the program's impact on student performance in their core classes and on their EOC exams. We are also interested in your perceptions of student attitude toward performance on their EOCs, attendance, and discipline. When responding, please be as specific as possible and provide relevant examples.

Impact of Program on Student Attitude towards School

In what ways do you perceive that the Uplift Mentor Program helped participating students improve academically in their core classes?

If the Uplift Mentor Program helped participating students improve their NC End of Course test scores, to what do you attribute this?

Student Attitude Toward Performance on EOC Tests: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, participation in the Uplift Mentor Program contributed to students achieving improved EOC test growth scores? Do you think the Uplift Mentor Program had a 'minimal, moderate or significant' impact on students' attitude towards performance on EOC tests? Why?

Student Attitude Toward Academic Achievement in Core Classes: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a 'minimal, moderate or significant' impact on students' attitude towards academic achievement in their core classes? Why?

Student Attitude Toward Attending School: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a ‘minimal, moderate or significant’ impact on students’ attitude towards attending school? Why?

Student Attitude Toward Discipline: Do you perceive, and if so in what ways, that the Uplift Mentor Program had a ‘minimal, moderate, or significant’ impact on students’ attitudes towards displaying appropriate behavior in school? Why?

Multi-level Leadership and Engagement

In what ways do you perceive that parents/guardians of the Uplift Mentor Program students are more actively engaged with the mentors o the program and/or school staff? Please elaborate.

In what ways are you as an administrator/church pastor actively engaged with the mentors of the program? Please elaborate.

Do you perceive that other administrators of Millbrook High School are actively engaged with the students of the program? If so, what ways do you see them engaged? If not, what ways do you feel they could have been engaged with the students? Please elaborate.

Multi-level Support

Do you feel that the principal of Millbrook High School provides adequate (financial and human) support for the Uplift Mentor Program? If so, what are some examples of human support that was provided? If so, what are some examples of financial support that was provided?

Program Equity

Do you perceive that all the students at Millbrook High School have an equitable opportunity to participate in the Uplift Mentor Program? How do you perceive that students are recruited for the program?

Do you perceive that the student participants of the Uplift Mentor Program reflect the demographic (race/ethnicity) profile of the Millbrook High School student population? If so, what processes are you aware of that were used for the selection of students? Were students allowed to volunteer for the program? Were students allowed to opt out of the program if they were invited to participate?

Student Learning and Social Engagement in School

Do you perceive that the students who participated in the Uplift Mentor Program became more socially engaged in school? If so, in what ways?

What other factors do you believe were responsible for the Uplift Mentor Program participants' success?

Do you think the Uplift Mentor Program was a major factor in student improvement? Yes or No? Why or Why not?

APPENDIX E: FREQUENCY DISTRIBUTION TABLES

Statistics

ProgramType			growth 2010-11	Ratio 9-10	Ratio10-11	days absent 09-10
Control	N	Valid	35	35	35	35
		Missing	0	0	0	0
	Mean		.035829	.924091	.882324	5.34
	Median		.027000	1.000000	1.000000	5.00
	Mode		-1.5940 ^a	1.0000	1.0000	0 ^a
	Std. Deviation		.6717384	.1110784	.1649182	5.610
Uplift	N	Valid	35	35	35	35
		Missing	0	0	0	0
	Mean		-.114514	.761122	.773152	8.40
	Median		-.253000	.750000	.875000	8.00
	Mode		-1.3650 ^a	1.0000	1.0000	9
	Std. Deviation		.6618581	.2377171	.2422807	6.141

Statistics

ProgramType			days absent 10-11	# Days ST Suspended 10-11	# Days ST Suspended 09-10
Control	N	Valid	35	35	35
		Missing	0	0	0
	Mean		5.86	.66	.26
	Median		3.00	.00	.00
	Mode		0	0	0
	Std. Deviation		8.961	2.248	.980
Uplift	N	Valid	35	35	35
		Missing	0	0	0
	Mean		11.09	2.00	1.17
	Median		10.00	.00	.00
	Mode		11	0	0
	Std. Deviation		8.716	4.187	2.176

Statistics

ProgramType			# Days LT Suspended 10-11	Diff. LT Suspensions
Control	N	Valid	35	35
		Missing	0	0
		Mean	.00	.00
		Median	.00	.00
		Mode	0	0
		Std. Deviation	.000	.000
Uplift	N	Valid	35	35
		Missing	0	0
		Mean	.17	.17
		Median	.00	.00
		Mode	0	0
		Std. Deviation	1.014	1.014

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Frequency Table

APPENDIX F: APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH STUDY TO WCPSS



WAKE COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

RESEARCH STUDY APPLICATION

“Save As” in your hard drive. Use the Tab Key to move around

Date of Submission: February 13, 2012

Proposal Number: _____ (E&R use only)

Title of Proposal: Quantitative and Qualitative Research (Mixed Methods)

Proposed Project Starting Date: January 15, 2011

Ending Date: Dec 2012

Research Applicant’s Name: Marvin Connelly, Jr

Address: P.O. Box 182

City: Garner

State: NC

Zip: 27529

Home Telephone Number: Area Code/No. 919/ 235-2326

Work Telephone Number: Area Code/No. 919/ 854-4349 Ext:

E-mail Address: mconnelly@wcpss.net, or pastorconnelly@bellsouth.net

Fax: Area Code/No. 919/ 854-1293

Sponsor of Research Project

Facility, Staff or Agency: Dr. William Grobe - East Carolina University

Address: 125 Ragsdale

City: Greenville

State: NC

Zip: 27858

Home Telephone Number: Area Code/No. 252/

Work Telephone Number: Area Code/No. 252/ 328-6499 Ext:

E-mail Address: grobew@ecu.edu

Fax: Area Code/No. 252/ 328-4062

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Participants	Sample Size	Description (Schools, Grades, Demographics)	Time Required	Data Required (From Participants or WCPSS Records)
Students	35 High School students	Millbrook HS 9-12,	No direct contact with the students	Student academic outcomes (EOC/EOG results), course completion rates, suspension rates, attendance rates, SWD status
Staff @WCPSS	2	Principal and assistant principal	2 hours cumulative	Discussion of data obtained from E&R and school discipline referrals
	25	Teachers	90 minute focus group	Responses to focus group questions
Parents	None			
Others	20		2 hours	Responses to focus group questions
Mentors from Crossroads Fellowship Church who mentor at Millbrook HS				

COMMENTS:

Student data and teacher demographic data should be de-identified

1. Ultimate Purpose of Study (Thesis, Publication in Journal):
Dissertation
2. Describe how this study will contribute to the Wake County Public School System
WCPSS currently invest a large amount of effort in community agency partnerships with schools. This study will study the impact that faith-based partnerships have on student achievement
3. Description of anticipated contribution to theory or field:
Provide suggested models for partnerships between schools and faith-based organizations
4. Hypotheses of the study:
Community collaboration (specifically with FBOs) have a positive impact on student academic and behavioral outcomes
5. Brief summary of research design including statistical analysis procedures:
Quantitative study using de-identified data, Mann-Whitney U Test, G-Power software. I will have a mentor program group and a control group with pre and post variables. I will estimate the difference between the groups and examine the correlations. Demographics: I will identify students for the mentor program group and the control group by similar demographics to include grade level, race, and gender. Individual students will not be identified. Qualitative study with focus group of teachers and mentors of students who participate in the Uplift Mentor Program, interview with principal, assistant principal and the pastor of the Crossroads Church that provides mentors for the Uplift Mentor Program.
6. State whether this is a single study, or one of a series planned or contemplated.
Single study
7. Describe how the equipment or procedures to be used might constitute a potential emotional or physical hazard to subjects.
None
8. List at least three prominent research studies, articles, or books most pertinent to the field of this research:

Abt Associates, Inc. (2007) Findings from a retrospective survey of faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs), an assessment of the compassion capital fund

Anderson-Butcher, D., Lawson, H. A., Bean, J., Flaspohler, P., Boone, B., & Kwiatkowski, A. (2008). Community collaboration to improve schools:

Introducing a new model from Ohio. *Children & Schools*, 30(1), pp. 161-172.

Epstein, J., Simon, B.S., Salinas, N.R., & Voorhis, F. L. (2002). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA, Corwin Press.

Epstein, J., Sheldon, s. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving student attendance through family and community involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 95(5), 308-318.

9. List equipment and names of tests to be used. (Attach descriptions or copies of test instruments.)

None

10. Facilities needed:

Coordination only with principals of Millbrook High School to use the media center for the focus group

11. Source of research funds: **No funds involved**

Personal funds

Assurances:

As the applicant of the research project, I understand that I am requesting assistance in a research project and that I am not requesting information pursuant to Open Records legislation. If my request for research assistance is granted, I agree to abide by all policies, rules, and regulations of the district INCLUDING THE SECURING OF WRITTEN PARENT PERMISSION PRIOR TO IMPLEMENTATION OF MY PROJECT.

As the sponsor for the research project, I have read the procedures for External Research in the Wake County Public School System (WCPSS) and understand that supervision of this project and responsibility for a report on its outcome rests with me. The privilege of conducting future studies in Wake County Public School System is conditioned upon the fulfillment of such obligations.

Applicant Signature: **Marvin Connelly, Jr** _____ Date: **February 13, 2012**____
(Required)

Sponsor Signature: _____ Date: _____
(When applicable)

Submit an electronic copy of this form to Evaluation and Research Department at:

eandr@wcpss.net

APPENDIX G: LETTER ASKING TEACHERS TO PARTICIPATE

IN FOCUS GROUP

February 13, 2012

Dear Millbrook Teachers,

Your administration has identified you as one of the teachers of the students who participate in the Uplift Mentor Program. It is for this reason that I am writing to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting. The major purpose of this study is to examine a faith-based partnership with Millbrook High School in the Wake County Public School System in North Carolina. The Uplift Mentor Partnership was developed by faculty at Millbrook High School and members of Crossroads Fellowship Church to improve student success. The study explores the impact of collaboration among schools and faith-based organizations on student success by examining the impact of a specific partnership - the Uplift Mentor Program partnership on three of the program goals: (a) passing scores or improvement on all End of Course (EOC) exams, (b) improved attendance, and (c) reduction of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions. This study has implications for educational leaders as they continue to examine the potential of partnerships with faith-based organizations to contribute to student success. While there is ample research on school and community partnerships, the research on partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations is more limited. Therefore, it is evident that this arena of collaboration needs further study. In order to be successful, partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations must ensure that the intended outcome is educational success for students and not opportunities for faith-based organizations to proselytize, hence, the reason for my study.

If you choose to participate, I will be asking you to participate in a 90 minute focus group. The district Evaluation and Research Department will match your name to the Uplift Mentor Program participants that you teach. Therefore, I will not be asking you for your name during the focus group. Once that relationship is established the data will be reported anonymously (e.g. Teacher A, Teacher B). I will ask staff from the Wake County E&R department to provide me with the grades for your students from the fall and spring semesters of 2009-10 and the fall and spring semester of 2010-11. I will also ask for the EOC scores of your students for these semesters as well. At the conclusion of this study I will destroy the key that links your focus group responses to your student performance data. Again, this linkage will be de-identified. For example, "Teacher A – to – student #1, Teacher A - to – student #2, etc.

Please take the time to decide if you would like to be involved in this study or not. Place an "X" in the space provided indicating your choice, sign, and return to the Evaluation and Research Department in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. I would like to receive all responses by (due date noted here). I am also available for questions prior to signing should you need.

If you agree to participate, note that at any time should you feel the need, you are free to withdraw from the study, you can email the Senior Director of WCPSS Evaluation and Research Department, Dr. Nancy Baenen (nbaenen@wcpss.net). If at any time during this study you have

concerns or questions, do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at pastorconnelly@bellsouth.net or (919)235-2326. Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,
Marvin Connelly, Jr.,
Marvin Connelly, Jr.

_____I understand the purposes of this study and my involvement and I am willing to participate.

_____ I would prefer not to participate.

X

Teacher signature

Date

APPENDIX H: LETTER ASKING MENTORS TO PARTICIPATE IN FOCUS GROUP

February 13, 2012

Dear Crossroads Fellowship Church Uplift Mentor Program Mentors,

Millbrook High School administration and your missions pastor have identified you as one of the mentors of the students who participate in the Uplift Mentor Program. It is for this reason that I am writing to invite you to participate in a study I am conducting. The major purpose of this study is to examine a faith-based partnership with Millbrook High School in the Wake County Public School System in North Carolina. The Uplift Mentor Partnership was developed by faculty at Millbrook High School and members of Crossroads Fellowship Church to improve student success. The study explores the impact of collaboration among schools and faith-based organizations on student success by examining the impact of a specific partnership - the Uplift Mentor Program partnership on three of the program goals: (a) passing scores or improvement on all End of Course (EOC) exams, (b) improved attendance, and (c) reduction of discipline referrals and subsequent suspensions. This study has implications for educational leaders as they continue to examine the potential of partnerships with faith-based organizations to contribute to student success. While there is ample research on school and community partnerships, the research on partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations is more limited. Therefore, it is evident that this arena of collaboration needs further study. In order to be successful, partnerships among schools and faith-based organizations must ensure that the intended outcome is educational success for students and not opportunities for faith-based organizations to proselytize, hence, the reason for my study.

If you choose to participate, I will be asking you to participate in a 90 minute focus group. You will be given a name tag with a letter on it to record responses to maintain anonymity. We will not ask for your name during the focus group. The district Evaluation and Research Department will link you to the students that you mentor without identifying you. For example Mentor A – to – Student #1, Student #2, etc.. Once that relationship is established the data will be reported anonymously (e.g. Mentor A, Mentor B). Please take the time to decide if you would like to be involved in this study or not. Place an “X” in the space provided indicating your choice, sign, and return to the Evaluation and Research Department in the self-addressed stamped envelope provided. I would like to receive all responses by (due date noted here). I am also available for questions prior to signing should you need.

If you agree to participate, note that at any time should you feel the need, you are free to withdraw from the study, just send an email letting to Dr. Nancy Baenen, Sr. Director of Evaluation and Research at nbaenen@wcpss.net. If at any time during this study you have concerns or questions, do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached at pastorconnelly@bellsouth.net or (919)235-2326. Thank you for taking the time to consider this proposal. I look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Marvin Connelly, Jr.,

Marvin Connelly, Jr.

I understand the purposes of this study and my involvement and I am willing to participate.

I would prefer not to participate.

X

Mentor signature

Date

APPENDIX I: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

Page 1 of 2

From: "umcirb@ecu.edu" <umcirb@ecu.edu>
To: "Connelly, Marvin, Jr" <CONNELLYM08@students.ecu.edu>
Date: Monday, March 12, 2012 02:52PM
Subject: IRB: Study Correspondence Letter



EAST CAROLINA UNIVERSITY
University & Medical Center Institutional Review
Board Office
1L-09 Brody Medical Sciences Building · Mail Stop 682
600 Moye Boulevard · Greenville, NC 27834
Office **252-744-2914** · Fax **252-744-2284** ·
www.ecu.edu/irb

Notification of Exempt Certification

From: Social/Behavioral IRB
To: [Marvin Connelly](#)
CC: [Bill Grobe](#)
Date: 3/12/2012
[UMCIRB 12-000393](#)
Re: PARTNERSHIPS AMONG SCHOOLS AND FAITH-BASED
ORGANIZATIONS: IMPACT ON STUDENT SUCCESS

I am pleased to inform you that your research submission has been certified as exempt on 3/9/2012. This study is eligible for Exempt Certification under category #1.

It is your responsibility to ensure that this research is conducted in the manner reported in your application and/or protocol, as well as being consistent with the ethical principles of the Belmont Report and your profession.

[http://domino2.wcpss.net/mail/1/18790571.nsf/\(%24Inbox\)/9F7A0C7F094320CE5F6A71...](http://domino2.wcpss.net/mail/1/18790571.nsf/(%24Inbox)/9F7A0C7F094320CE5F6A71...) 3/14/2012

This research study does not require any additional interaction with the UMCIRB unless there are proposed changes to this study. Any change, prior to implementing that change, must be submitted to the UMCIRB for review and approval. The UMCIRB will determine if the change impacts the eligibility of the research for exempt status. If more substantive review is required, you will be notified within five business days.

The UMCIRB office will hold your exemption application for a period of five years from the date of this letter. If you wish to continue this protocol beyond this period, you will need to submit an Exemption Certification request at least 30 days before the end of the five year period.

The Chairperson (or designee) does not have a potential for conflict of interest on this study.

IRB00000705 East Carolina U IRB #1 (Biomedical) IORG0000418
IRB00003781 East Carolina U IRB #2 (Behavioral/SS) IORG0000418
IRB00004973
East Carolina U IRB #4 (Behavioral/SS Summer) IORG0000418

Study.PI Name:
Study.Co-Investigators:

APPENDIX J: WCPSS APPROVAL OF RESEARCH LETTER



DATA AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5625 DILLARD DRIVE
CARY, NORTH CAROLINA 27518
PHONE: 919.431-7193
FAX: 919.431-7215

March 21, 2011

Marvin Connelly
PO Box 182
Garner, NC 27529

RE: Project No. 896

Dear Marvin:

Your request to conduct research in the Wake County Public School System has been approved. We wish you well in conducting your study. Please use this letter with the school to show permission has been granted to proceed. Let us know if you have questions.

We look forward to learning the results of your study entitled *Partnerships among Schools and Faith-Based Organizations: Impact on Student Success*. Please remember to send me a summary of your findings once your study is completed.

Sincerely,

Nancy Baenen

Nancy Baenen
Chair, Research Review Committee
Data and Accountability
Your email and phone info

c: Dana King